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To See the World and Man

by James Burnham

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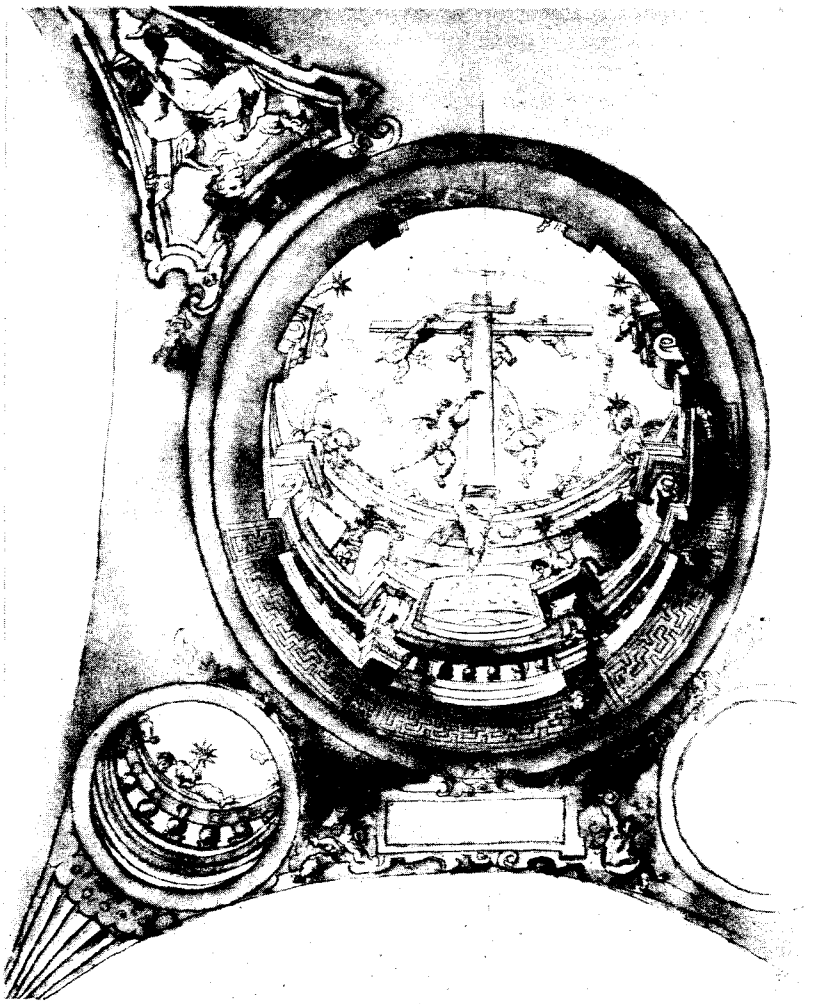
To See the World and Man



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COMMENT

On December 8, 1983, James Burnham was presented with the first Richard M. Weaver Award for Scholarly Letters by The Ingersoll Foundation. Mr. Burnham's address to those assembled at Chicago's Ritz-Carlton hotel follows:

I want to begin with a word of thanks to the sponsors of this award, the trustees of the Ingersoll Foundation. It is an honor to be honored in such a fashion, and in the company of such a distinguished man of letters as Jorge Luis Borges.

As you may be aware, I have not, in any formal sense, put pen to paper for a period of time. But, clearly, the occasion calls for a few words.

Much writing is an exercise in self-education. At any rate, that is a fair way to describe most of my work, especially if one starts with *The Managerial Revolution.* From 1934 until the winter of 1939-40, I was a member of Trotsky's Fourth International. Like many members of my generation, I had observed that the established capitalist order in nearly every major country had, to a large extent, crumbled, taking with it much of the social and political order. For a number of years I accepted some of the empty ideological mumbo-jumbo that was associated with the Trotskyite movement.

Then, one day, I tried to relate the political formula which I had been manipulating to reality. What, in fact, was the relationship between the Soviet Union and its neighbors? What were the internal dynamics of Soviet society, and what did they have in common with other major powers, such as the United States and Germany? My book, *The Managerial Revolution,* was an attempt to ask the right questions and deliver an early, partial answer.

With the hindsight of over 40 years, it becomes clear that the early statement of the hypothesis of the managerial revolution was somewhat rigid and doctrinaire. Some of the topical political propositions were wrong or incomplete. But the essential point remains valid, and, indeed, has been reconfirmed: the capitalist system of the 19th century is finished, however much some of our contemporary theoreticians wish to the contrary. But capitalism is not being replaced by socialism of the abstract Marxist ideal, contrary to the confident predictions of *its* theoreticians.

The challenge, then, for serious students of the real world, is to analyze the precise nature of the historical transition away from 19th-century capitalism, including the organizational forms in which this transition expresses itself. At the same time, there is a responsibility to encourage others to promote those elements in society during this transition that promise at least the minimum of liberty and justice that distinguish human society from a merely animal existence.

In the process of securing these minimum conditions, I have always held, as do the trustees of tonight's event, that truthfulness and rationality are essential priorities in the discussion of public issues. What this means is that only by renouncing the straitjacket of ideology can we begin to see the world and man. An ideology is a normative commitment posing as science or as a universally valid philosophy. It cannot be refuted by evidence or rational analysis; so long as the commitment holds, it is irrefutable. In this sense, the ideology of liberalism, as I defined it in the *Suicide of the West,* is no different from the ideology of the communists. Where the latter has generally been the ideology of an aggressive, expansionist Soviet state, the former has been the ideology of Western suicide.

But the application of truthfulness and rationality to the dissection of ideologies and the promotion of liberty and justice does not mean being confined to a narrowly scientific, quantitative set of instruments. Certainly those who I have called "the defenders of freedom," the Machiavellians, did not rely upon Gallup polls or electronic computers to gain their extraordinary insights into the nature of the political process. As I observed, a touch playfully, in the opening lines of my book *Congress and the American Tradition,* "In ancient times, before the illusions of science had corrupted traditional wisdom, the founders of Cities were known to be gods or demigods."

Truthfulness in the analysis of human history and conduct should make at least a minor allowance for magic, luck, or divine favor. This point is especially relevant to the theory or history of government. Unless there is some acceptance—whether by habit, tradition, or faith—of a principle which completes the justification for government, that government will either collapse or will have to fall back upon force—the ultimate nonrational justification.

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Let me conclude by suggesting that there is a fundamental point of intersection between the theory of a just government and much of the underpinning of what we know as Western civilization. Just as there is a necessary nonrational element in the former, so is there a powerful, ordering rational element in Christianity. The start of the Gospel of St. John reads, in English, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The blending of Platonic elements with Christianity is evident, but the process becomes much more so in the Greek text from which the translation is made. In the Greek, "beginning" is not *genesus* which means a start in time, as used in the first book of the Old Testament, but *arkhe,* which means the beginning not so much at a particular point in time at which things start, but as the foundation principle out of which being comes. "Word," of course, comes from the Greek *logos,* which includes the notion of reason, the inner essence of meaning. Thus, we have the idea that in the beginning, as the foundation principle of the universe, was meaningful reason, and the Word—logos—was with God, the Word was God. That is to say, the universe as conceived by this Gospel is not arbitrary, not a matter of chance or accident, but a reasonable world following a reasoned order with God.

It is this interpretation of the meaning of reality, taken from and developed from the Greek philosophers, that runs through the great tradition of Christianity. It is expressed once more by the greatest of all poets at the height of the Middle Ages, by Dante, when he writes, in *The Divine Comedy,* "In the great seas of being, all things preserve a mutual order and this it is that maketh the Universe like unto God."

James Burnham

Social Register

The *Los Angeles Times* recently featured a picture of a youthful male with the face of a retarded wrestler and the following caption:

> Los Angeles designer Paul Batoon shows pleated, wraparound skirt in his fall menswear collection. He tops it with matching T-shirt, wide-body jacket. Available at Allure on Melrose Avenue.

An *LA Times* staff writer offers a comment on the new fashion:

> When a woman wears knickers, a tuxedo or a tunic, it's fashion. When a man wears a dress, it's drag.... Or is it? Think of Africa and the Arab world—nations of men in caftans—or Bali and Tahiti—"paradises" where men wear sarongs. Members of Scotland's Highland regiments wear knee-baring kilts of various tartans, while evzones, the elite military men of Greece, stand guard in wide white miniskirts and tights.

Rich erudition and impeccable reasoning. So why does the countenance of Mr. Batoon strike us as a rare exemplification of mental ruin? Strange. We never suspected that the mere idea of trousers had such an awesome, tyrannical power. □

Notables

Naiveté

Jamaica Kincaid: *At the Bottom of the River*; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Some 40 books were published in 1982 that had their genesis in the pages of *The New Yorker.* Last December one that will be added to the 1983 total, *At the Bottom of the River* by Jamaica Kincaid, emerged in all of its slim elegance (82 pages), including a reproduction of "Green Summer" by Burne-Jones on its cover and a panegyric by Susan Sontag ("splendid stories about personal and cosmic desire . . .") on its flyleaf. The book is dedicated to two people: the author's mother and Mr. William Shawn, the redoubtable editor of *The New Yorker* who also happens to be the author's father-in-law.

The New Yorker was once synonymous with terms including *elegance, refinement, urbanity,* and *sophistication.* Nowadays, however, *simplemindedness* is becoming operative, as evidenced in the social sciences by Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* and in belles lettres by *At the Bottom of the River.* Ms. Sontag notwithstanding, the latter is a collection of almost-stories, demi-vignettes. Kincaid was born in Antigua and draws on local color in her postcard-sized pieces. Back when *The New Yorker* was a tyro there were those who were still drunk on the dregs of Gauguin and who touted what they characterized as "vital" and "genuine" in the artistic forms of "primitive" societies. The more rudimentary the form, whether it be sculpture or dance, the better. Kincaid is recycling this sort of thing in the prose of a wide-eyed, West Indian ingenue. The pose didn't ring true in the 1920's, and even the imprimatur of *The New Yorker* doesn't help it today. □

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The Victory of the Unvanquished Losers

Peter Wyden: *The Passionate War: The Narrative History of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939;* Simon and Schuster; New York.

by Lee Congdon

History has not been kind to the radical left, not because modern revolutions have invariably failed, but because they have frequently succeeded. So deplorable has been the record of revolutions in power that those who continue to proclaim the necessity of total political/social solutions find themselves in the unenviable position of having to persuade the skeptical that the next "liberation" will not result in thought control, concentration camps, and mass murder. Even the most uncharitable among us might sympathize with the predicament of those who are called upon to say something flattering about Lenin, Stalin, or Mao; small wonder that contemporary *enragés* prefer to speak of such media heroes as Castro and the Sandinistas. But even these idols tarnish as their despotisms show no sign of withering away. Where, then, can a radical turn? Few, if any, of them would now take the trouble to defend the governments of Vietnam or North Korea, and they know full well that any attempt to extol the Eastern European regimes will meet with cynical laughter.

It is largely for this reason that the Spanish Civil War continues to excite the radical imagination. In Quixote's somber land the left was defeated and therefore spared the painful duty of apologizing for the consequences of victory. The peddlers of revolution are thus at liberty to call attention to noble intentions, heroic gestures, and the villainy of the victors—in this case a military clique that accepted aid from Hitler and Mussolini. There is, it seems, nothing quite so awe inspiring—and so safe—as a *lost* cause. One thinks of the romantic aura that still surrounds the late, unlamented Salvador Allende. And always one remembers Spain, which was, if not the last, certainly the most sacred cause. "The Republican *causa,*" Peter Wyden informs us, "stood against Hitler, the priests, the landowners, the military caste, the privileged." What right-thinking person would not wish to make such a purpose his own?

The author of this clumsily written volume is yet another tireless, and tiresome, propagandist of the left masquerading as a historian. Throughout, he manages to portray all who fought for the Republic, particularly the communists, as well-intentioned lovers of liberty and uncompromising opponents of "fascism." He lionizes the famous communist leader "La Pasionaria" ("the passion flower," Dolores Ibarruri) as well as Stalin's ubiquitous agent Mikhail Koltzov. He speaks with reverence of Republican champions including Hemingway, Malraux, Robert Capa, and Arthur Koestler, and he lavishes praise on members of the International Brigades, especially American communists such as Alvah Bessie, Ben Leider, and Robert Merriman, the University of California economist whom Hemingway immortalized as Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*

"World War II was the surgery," Wyden concludes, "Spain was the infection, and the men and women who flocked there were the committed few who could tell their children that they had been there, present at the creation of our age." That is, the German-born Wyden maintains that the Spanish Civil War was part of a larger struggle against fascism that ended only with the Soviet Army's capture of Berlin in 1945. Although advanced in a crude and amateurish manner, this interpretation—it is only fair to say—does not differ markedly from that offered by Hugh Thomas in his able and exhaustive study, *The Spanish Civil War.*

If one rereads the large and impressive literature inspired by the Spanish Civil War and pauses to consider how many intellectuals died or were prepared to die in Spain, one cannot but be impressed by the collective will to believe in an antifascist crusade. Driven by an almost religious fervor, the poet John Cornford and the Marxist aesthetician Christopher Caudwell fought and died for the Republic; so did the Hungarian writer Máté Zalka, better known by his nom de guerre "General Lukács." André Malraux risked his life as commander of a Republican air squadron, the "Escuadrilla España"; Hemingway acquired an unwonted political consciousness; and Auden could write, rather thoughtlessly, of "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder" ("Spain"—1937). Even the aloof Samuel Beckett took sides. "UPTHEREPUBLIC!" he wrote in reply to the question: "Are you for, or against, the legal Government and the People of Republican Spain?" No doubt some of these intellectuals were initially aroused by the murder in rebel-held Granada of the great poet-dramatist Federico García Lorca, but most seem to have been impelled by the unexpected

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Dr. Congdon is the author of The Young Lukács *(University of North Carolina Press).*

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discovery of what appeared to be a compelling reason to die, and hence to live. Somehow Madrid and Barcelona were not like Verdun and the Somme.

At a distance of almost half a century, it is not difficult to forgive contemporary defenders of the Republic for their naiveté—if only because they produced such splendid novels as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *Man's Hope*. But the time has now come to rethink the Spanish Civil War and to begin to distinguish myth from reality. Fortunately, it is not necessary to start from scratch. George Orwell, that most conservative of leftists, was among the first to experience and to speak the truth. Fighting with the POUM, an anti-Stalinist communist splinter group, he understood that the Soviets and their agents were far more dedicated to the liquidation of the rival left than they were to the defeat of Franco—and he said so in *Homage to Catalonia*. Moreover, he assailed the "pink pansy left" for its loose talk of necessary murder and pointed out that Franco "was not strictly comparable with Hitler or Mussolini." The General, he argued, was a traditional man of the right, more a defender of feudalism than a proponent of fascism.

Nor was Orwell's voice as isolated as we are accustomed to think. It is to be regretted that few today know, or even care, that one of Spain's finest writers, Camilo José Cela, fought for Franco or that Evelyn Waugh, that wonderfully iconoclastic curmudgeon, expressed his preference for the Nationalists without thinking it necessary to embrace fascism. "I am not a Fascist," he wrote at the time, "nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism. It is mischievous to suggest that such a choice is imminent." It is to Waugh's lasting credit that he refused to be impaled on the horns of a bogus dilemma.

However, it remains true that any serious rethinking of the war will depend less on citing early critics of the Republic than on reassessing the role of Soviet Russia, the changing character of the Republican government, and the essential nature of the conflict. What did Stalin hope to achieve in Spain? Was he a great antifascist leader selflessly extending his hand to beleaguered comrades in a distant land? Many observers, then and now, have portrayed him in this way. Wyden, for example, is proud of the Russians, who "stood alone to the end in their support of the Republic," while in Washington Eleanor Roosevelt "was about to give up pressuring her husband to lift the arms embargo." It was not the last time, he is eager to suggest, that the Russians fought for truth and justice while the Americans supported—by action or inaction—a fascist government. Stalin may have been guilty of the "cult of personality," but he was an implacable foe of fascism.

With the considerable advantage of hindsight, however, it is perfectly clear that Stalin initially proffered aid to the Republic—for which he was handsomely

paid with Spanish gold—because he wished to forestall a quick rebel victory. In such an event, he reasoned, France might fall to a revolution from the right, thereby making it possible for Hitler to turn his attention toward the east. It was not long, however, before the Soviet tyrant became convinced that British and French nonintervention spelled certain doom for the Republic and from then on he was concerned only to prolong hostilities. In this way he could increase his bargaining power in Berlin and keep Hitler occupied far from the Soviet frontier. At the same time, he declared war on all left-wing groups that refused to submit to his imperious will.

According to George Kennan, who knew and understood Stalin, the Man of Steel hated those communists and fellow travelers who were inspired by a genuine —if misguided—idealism and who were devoted to communist principles. It was, we should remember, precisely during these years that he purged (murdered) Bukharin and all the other Old Bolsheviks after they made their "confessions" at the infamous Moscow Trials. Personal hatred and paranoia notwithstanding, Stalin had every reason to be wary of such true believers, since they would never accept the alliance with Hitler that he had almost certainly begun to contemplate seriously as early as 1934. On this matter, we have the authoritative testimony of General Krivitsky, chief of Soviet military intelligence in Western Europe before his defection in 1937. Moreover, a nazi-Soviet alliance is perfectly consistent with the Soviet dictator's murder of almost all of those who served in Spain and with his thoroughgoing political nihilism. Stalin did not agree to the nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 reluctantly; on the contrary, he looked forward to dividing Europe with the führer.

The evolving character of the Republican government also requires reexamination. Was it a liberal democratic regime dependent upon Russian support but capable of true independence? Was Juan Negrín, the last premier and finance minister, a moderate socialist? Or was he, as Burnett Bolloten has argued so persuasively, the communists' man, far more subservient to Moscow than was his predecessor Largo Caballero, "the Spanish Lenin"? There is room for honest disagreement here, but surely no one can continue to maintain the fiction that the government that fell to Franco was one that reflected the essential decency and moderation of its meditative but

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Fleeting Truths

A jazz musician in Rockford, Illinois, on the state of arts in the contemporaneity:

> This is the age of mediocrity. In the world of rock, there are a lot of talentless people making lots of money. In the 1800's, if you didn't have talent, no one wanted to hear you. Now, it's the image that sells, not the talent, and that upsets me. . . . People are herded into believing something is good, even when it isn't. Anyone with two lessons can play rock. □

politically irrelevant president, Manuel Azaña. Even Hugh Thomas concedes, for example, that the Republic's communist-backed political police force, the SIM *(Servicio de Investigación Militar)* employed "all the vile torture of the NKVD."

Finally, there is the nature of the war. Despite massive foreign intervention, it should be remembered that it was a *Spanish* civil war with roots deep in Spanish history. At least as far back as the Carlist War of the previous century, Spain had been torn by fundamental and irreconcilable antagonisms—regional, class, and religious. Of these, none, Gerald Brenan has written, "was more bitter or envenomed than that between the Catholic Church and its opponents." Enraged by the Church's wealth and loyalty to the upper classes, "republicans" burned and despoiled churches and convents in Andalusia, Aragon, Madrid, and Catalonia. "At no time in the history of Europe," Hugh Thomas has observed without exaggeration, "has so passionate a hatred of religion and all its works been shown." By the time the Republic was proclaimed in 1931, religious and antireligious hatreds were so intense that no conceivable compromise was possible. Spain would know peace only when one side or the other won an unconditional victory.

None of this had much to do with fascism or antifascism. There were, in fact, very few fascists in Spain and most of them were no more dangerous—dare one suggest they were less dangerous?—than the communists and such anarchists as Buenaventura Durutti, who was pleased to speak of the "discipline of indiscipline." The dignified Falangist leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the military officer who ruled Spain from 1923 to 1930, was respected even by many of his enemies on the left—and was in no sense a Hitler. The Spanish Civil War as fascist/antifascist confrontation is yet another of the self-congratulatory myths of the left.

But if a study of the Spanish Civil War tells us little about the false formula of fascist vs. antifascist, it reveals much about Spain's historical culture and the nature of the human condition. In one of the most powerful chapters of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Pilar, the revolutionary who was among Hemingway's most successful female characters, describes in unsparing detail the murder of a town's "fascists" by Pablo, her lover, and the revolutionary mob. It is a terrifying and unforgettable moment, a window into the heart of darkness. Yet, as Hemingway knew, the violence was not all on one side. The *Caudillo* was also consumed by an inordinate desire for retribution. Showing his enemies no mercy, he refused to curb the savage Moors and did not think it necessary to fault General Yagüe for making of Badajoz a city of corpses. However fortunate his victory may have been (given the alternative), Franco made himself the heir of Torquemada, the conquistadors, and the Duke of Alba.

Perhaps no one has captured the world of Spanish hatred and cruelty more completely than Camilo José Cela. In his classic novel, *The Family of Pascual Duarte* (1942), Cela hit upon the ideal metaphor for his country's blood-drenched history: Duarte's compulsive and multiple murders. In the final scene, this murderous pícaro kills his mother, a ritual rehearsal of a people's war against itself: "I threw myself upon her and held her down. . . . We fought. It was the most awful struggle you can imagine. . . . She kicked me. She hit me and bit me. Suddenly her mouth found my nipple, my left nipple, and tore it away. That was the moment I sank the blade into her throat." Like Picasso's "Guernica," Cela's novel is a vision of unbridled violence. Together they serve to remind us that the true significance of the Spanish Civil War lies in its reenactment of the timeless drama of sin and blood sacrifice. □

Maturing (& Remembering) in Print

James T. Farrell: *Sam Holman;* Prometheus Books; Buffalo, NY.

by Thomas L. Ashton

Achieving self-definition through self-division is a truly impossible mission, but the cordless ego of contemporary liberalism continues to try to repopulate the world with its own image. That the result would be a universe of images reflecting a totalitarian state does not disturb the liberal gestapo. Without history, they cannot see the moral measure of their own selfishness. Thus, although they claim that right and left meet at their extremes, a little thought shows the difference between individualism and selfishness. Conservatism remembers; the cordless ego always wants to forget.

The editors of the *Wall Street Journal* recently made this same discovery as they criticized the Stanford University academics who are opposed to the Hoover Institution and a Reagan Library:

> The battle at Stanford tells a lot about what passes for the noble tradition of liberalism on the campus these days . . . it seems to have been appropriated by a fringe that doesn't seem to think it

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> should have to play by the rules it so noisily proclaims for others. When the leaders . . . first presented their petition, for example, they refused to disclose the names of all the signatories—a tactic more typical of nightriders and witch hunters than of scholars dedicated to open inquiry and debate.

What would the editors have made of a ban on support for research in South Africa that recently enabled an eastern campus to reaffirm its liberal commitment? The logic of combating racism by burning books is the same logic that wants to keep anthropologists and researchers after new medicines out of the veldt and into the Soviet Union. Conservatives will see the boot on the other foot. Most of today's students will miss it. The intellectual egotists posing as scholars have deliberately forgotten the prototypes. This is why current students will never be given James T. Farrell's *Sam Holman* to read. They might find out something about the 1930's and the manipulative techniques of the CPUSA if they did so. Instead they will get a copy of *Studs Lonigan* and a critique that misattributes that novel's negativity to the American way. They will be told nothing about Farrell—that would require research conducted by those opposed to research in the first place.

James Farrell was first a communist collaborator, always a Trotskyite intellectual, and last fervently opposed to Marxism. Critics now speak of "his political development through various stages of anti-Stalinist socialism to the liberal internationalism of Stevenson and Kennedy," but Stevenson and Kennedy would certainly have known the difference. At the start Farrell's pen was no stranger to the procommunist *New Masses, New Freeman, Daily Worker,* and *Partisan Review* (originally a John Reed Club organ); later he was in *The New Republic,* a collective intellectual heir. His fellow traveling led him eventually to the Trotsky Defense Committee, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Workers Party—in which he persisted throughout World War II. But Farrell caught up with his New York intellectual friends who had seen Hitler and the light. In *Reflections at Fifty* (1954) his rejection is explicit:

> Since the end of World War II, America has been under constant attack by Moscow. Over and over again, Communist propagandists have attempted to convince West Europeans that America is without tradition and culture, that its freedom is a lie, and that it seeks to precipitate a third World War. Gloomily, I must grant that this propaganda has had some influence on the minds of some of the West European intellectuals, though today America has become the hope of mankind. For America stands as the biggest and strongest bastion of freedom in a world menaced by totalitarians.

So wrote Farrell having 30 years earlier approved of Lenin's thoughts on the function of propaganda in literature. His recantation is reminiscent of Susan Sontag's 1982 discovery that communist anti-Semitism had something to do with nazism. Farrell's *Trip to Hanoi* is called *Dewey in Mexico,* which remembers the leftist pilgrimage made to defend Trotsky in person and in exile in 1937. That history repeats itself—for those who know history—was to be Farrell's last discovery.

In the 1960's American authors combined Sartre, Hesse, and Vietnam to come up with Bob Dylan. Farrell's generation had other tastes: for them it was Dreiser plus Dewey and the Depression equals Marx. Dos Passos, Sinclair Lewis, Farrell, et al. found Nietzsche in Dreiser. Dewey was teaching at Columbia, and his students included Hook, Schapiro, Trilling, Eastman, Hacker, Solow, Isaacs, and others who would dominate the New York intelligentsia for 30 years. All of them fell in love at the time of Sacco and Vanzetti and out of bed in the years of Stalin and Hitler. Farrell was no different in the end, and his late novels have suffered like those of Lewis and Dos Passos. For liberal critics the best works of all three are the early socialist or protocommunist fictions; their later works are always the product of "declining years." Though Farrell wrote 52 books in his lifetime, he is only known as a one-book man, the book being *Studs Lonigan* (1935), a trilogy made of *Young Lonigan* (1932), *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan* (1934), and *Judgment Day* (1935). Farrell has this in common with Dante: his Hell is more popular than his Heaven. For liberal critics *Judgment Day* has the virtue of a final ray of hope in the form of a communist demonstration contrasted with Studs's personal

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decline. Farrell's later works remain buried in critical concrete as though they were radioactive. At best they are acknowledged in a phrase: "His humanism is friendly to reformist social thought and to modern pragmatism." He changed his mind and wasn't worth reading after that, intimates the liberal critic.

Certainly Farrell had only one subject—himself as lower-middle class Irish American on the way to being a writer and finally getting there. His two places

are the South Side of Chicago where his young men struggle to be artists, and New York's Greenwich Village where artists struggle to become writers by getting published. Studs fails because he crushes the sensibility and sensitivity that embarrass his tough guy image. Next came three volumes (1936, 1938, 1940) that show why Danny O'Neill succeeds and gets as far as the University of Chicago. Farrell added a fourth volume, *My Days of Anger,* in 1943 to make explicit just how family and church steer Danny toward fiction and away from the Party. The Village is the setting of the Bernard Carr trilogy that followed (1946, 1949, 1952). The struggle to publish quickly becomes the class struggle, but as Bernard makes it as a writer (very much a la Norman Podhoretz) he turns his back upon Party and socialists both as the two confront each other at a packed pro-Trotsky meeting. Bernard is left just about where Farrell was when he wrote in the *Partisan Review:*

> I have long been an opponent of Stalinism. But I am not in favor of an alliance of intellectuals which is based solely on opposition to Russia. Such an alliance will only play into the hands of our own war mongers. I consider Stalin to be in the Hitler war camp and his politics to be Red imperialism. But in order to fight one imperialism, I do not want to join another one. I am against both imperialisms.

Though Farrell had twice revised both his own and his protagonists' politics he was still a long way from the conservatism of *Reflections at Fifty.* But his decision to add another novel, *The Face of Time* (whose title tells us that Yeats's conservatism was appealing), to the Danny O'Neill books in 1953 suggests a desire for further revision and renewed appreciation of the role of the family in Danny's success.

At 50, Farrell appeared to be wrapping it up. He wrote no novels for 10 years, until *The Silence of History* appeared in 1963. It began a series about another young Irish-American writer, this time called Eddie Ryan. *What Time Collects* (1964), *Lonely for the Future* (1966), *Invisible Swords* (1971), and *Sam Holman* (posthumously in 1983) followed. If these books are unknown, it's probably because critics like Granville Hicks admitted that they hadn't bothered to read the early volumes while they were reviewing the later ones. The Ryan novels begin where the prior trilogy ended: "Socialism might be inevitable, but it won't save mankind." History is the enemy of politics because history fosters moral judgment. So Farrell needs to revise one more time—and more explicitly so than ever before. *Sam Holman* is a restatement of the last of the Bernard Carr books, *Yet Other Waters.* This time the writer hero begins working for a leftist social science encyclopedia and winds up as a senior editor at *Forbes* or *Fortune.* His final essay affirms the democracy of

In the Mail

***Billy the Kid: A Bio-Bibliography* by Jon Tuska; Greenwood Press; Westport, CT.** Given the facts that his real name was Henry McCarty, that those who claim to be "in the know" usually cite him as William Bonney, that virtually everyone else calls him Billy the Kid, it's no wonder that this book is as comprehensive as it is confusing.

***Recapitalizing America: Alternatives to the Corporate Distortion of National Policy* by S. M. Miller and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey; Routledge & Kegan Paul; Boston.** If the subtitle isn't a telling enough clue, then the authors' characterization of "Reaganism" (A.K.A. Reaganomics) should close the case: "reactionary recapitalization." Or how about this: "'Communitarian' and 'progressive' are terms that appeal to us."

***Bourgeois Anonymous* by Morris Philipson; Schocken Books; New York.** A reprint of a modern satirical tale that first appeared in 1965. The author notes in a new introduction: "I am told that it is 'an underground book.' I have no evidence for that and do not know what the actual qualifications are. Of course, on the literal surface of that expression it sounds like a book that has been buried." A worthwhile exhumation.

***Reagan Electionomics 1976-1984: How Reagan Ambushed the Pollsters* by Donald J. Devine; Green Hill Publishers; Ottawa, IL.** A man on the inside of the 1980 Presidential victory explains how and why it happened. If he is responsible for coining the title *(Electionomics?),* then big government may not be behind us, just working on jargon.

***Clear and Present Danger: Church and State in Post-Christian America* by William A. Stanmeyer; Servant Books; Ann Arbor, MI.** A well-meaning "meditation on the present status of Christianity in America" by a man who fears "overt persecution" of Christians if they don't eliminate their "spiritual laziness and civic topor." It's unfortunate that the subtitle smacks of a fait accompli.

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the American workplace. But the bulk of the novel is set in the 30's, and both Holman and his politics are satirized by Farrell as selfishly selfless. The 30's are rendered whole because an older Farrell was worried that readers without history wouldn't recognize how much the Rubin rhetoric of the 60's and 70's was only an echo.

Sam Holman is hardly appetizing. Political awareness that is as egotistical as it is revolutionary separates Sam and his fellow travelers "from so many other New Yorkers, from other Americans, and perhaps even more so, from other Jews." Readers who want to know which came first—the narcissism or the alienation—soon get an answer as Sam rationalizes Party ethics: "If, in the process of raising funds to free the Booner Boys, it became necessary for the Party to direct some of these funds to other purposes, how pertinent was the criticism that the Party had used these boys to advance its own fundamental aims?" The excuse is that the Party has to *correct* history, not just *redirect* it. In other words—and here Farrell's analysis wins its point—"he wanted history now!" What he gets is his author's message, not that the Party had become its own end, but that "the Party was both the means and the end." To underline the point, Sam's political dirty tricks become life's dirty business when his disenchantment with his marriage is made to mirror his falling-out with the CPUSA. Sam does his best in both causes by using his marriage bed with his secretary, co-workers, best friend's wife, wife's best friend, and a number of Party handmaidens. (The curious will recognize the Vassar graduates—just as the betraying and betrayed of the New York intelligentsia can be identified.) In other words, Sam makes his wife walk out—just as he makes the Party expel him because he lacks the character to quit. As Farrell puts it:

> The full responsibility for expulsion or for his leaving the Party had to be placed on those in control. He . . . should not say or do anything, unless absolutely necessary, that would lead to quitting or walking out. . . . If they were steamrolled, they wouldn't proceed; they would be rolled over. Thrown out. This strategy, he thought, was the best way to get kicked out.

A martyr to Trotsky, a martyr to casual sex, but always a martyr proud that "I'm free—I have relieved myself of a wife and of membership in the Communist Party." So the Party smears him with false editorials and his wife smears him in her autobiographical novel. He deserves as much. Sam's martyrdom decays under the attacks. Finally he learns that "the Movement was historic but it did not have the scope of history," and he doubts Trotsky on the Revolution. In Farrell's words, the "conceit of history is a little ridiculous." Unfortunately, the cordless ego is hooked on it.

Sam Holman corrects Maurice Isserman's *Which Side Were You On? The American Communist Party During the Second World War,* which makes CPUSA a stepchild of knight-errant liberalism, and William O'Neill's *A Better World—The Great Schism: Stalinism and the American Intellectuals,* in which Holman and company are always preferred to neoconservatives. Ultimately even Farrell had no use for either myth. His book also reveals something about politics and publishing, explaining why in *The Nation* Vonnegut means "good," whereas in the *New York Review of Books* "good" means Vidal. In Sam Holman's literary world writers are even now sharpening their pencils in preparation for an epic about the injustice of a Congress that censures homosexual relations with minors; a few are trying to corner the literary market by turning *Sophie's Choice* into a cookbook. Worse, Sam Holman is himself the symbolic literary father of the current generation of unreadable authors mired in liberal clichés. In their books sign-language-using apes (the newest noble savages) defeat military computer scientists to ward off ecological disaster; or fatuous film stars prove their liberation in unblushing bedroom biographies; or Latin American revolutions are dissected with a cynicism whose nihilism is ample justification for the policy of President Reagan and Ambassador Kirkpatrick. The reader's depressing sense of déjà vu gives evidence that the cordless ego best loves talking to itself. □

Knuckling Under & Soaring Free

Carol Avins: *Border Crossings: The West and Russian Identity in Soviet Literature 1917-1934;* University of California Press; Berkeley.

Anna Akhmatova: *Poems;* Selected and translated by Lyn Coffin; W. W. Norton; New York.

by Charles A. Moser

In *Border Crossings* Carol Avins, associate professor of Slavic language at Northwestern University, grapples with a question that has long agitated Russian minds: Where does that land which links Europe to Asia geographically stand in its cultural relationship to them, and especially to Europe? Virtually all of Russia's serious intellects have addressed this problem at least since the time of Peter the Great, and there is little likelihood that it will be resolved in the near future. The communist revolution of 1917 added an entirely new dimension to this old question. Economically backward Russia, in defiance of all Marxist tenets, established the first state based on the doctrines of that very European ideology oriented toward the industrial proletariat; it then provided the base

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from which that ideology, soon well armed, threatened the Europe which gave it birth, engendering a historical crisis whose outcome no one can yet foresee.

The modern communist state is peculiar in that its establishment in a particular country motivates emigration on a scale unknown in previous centuries, as ordinary people discard their earthly possessions, their native society, to escape an intolerable regime. The phenomenon of mass emigration appeared initially in Russia, the first victim of communist revolution. Communist authorities had to deal both with that exodus and with the extreme ideological hostility exacerbating the ever-present divisions between Russia and the West during the early years of Soviet literature, which Avins here investigates.

If a book is to handle a cultural problem of such complexity successfully, it must be properly constructed. Unfortunately, Avins has failed to organize her study in such a way as to bring her major points out clearly. She starts fairly promisingly by dividing her book into four major segments. The first considers, somewhat abstractedly, the transformation of the relationship between Russia and the West after 1917; the second treats the question of emigration to the West; the third discusses travel by Soviet writers abroad; and the fourth deals with the influence of Westerners who came to the Soviet Union for ideological or other reasons. However, within these divisions Avins offers chapters treating individual writers —including Mandelstam, Mayakovski, Pilniak, Bulgakov, Fedin, and Olesha— and their works. Since most of these works are relatively worthwhile, they are rife with literary ambiguities and individual idiosyncrasies. And that makes it impossible for Avins to develop consistently any particular ideas, themes, or attitudes. She writes sensibly and has positioned many useful building blocks, but the book is disjointed and difficult to follow.

At one point Avins quotes Gertrude Stein claiming that a writer can be truly free only outside his own culture: "It was not what France gave you but what it did not take away from you that was important." One may wonder how much relevance that formulation had to American writers generally; certainly, it would not apply to very many Russians. One of the greatest 19th-century Russian semi-expatriates, Ivan Turgenev, would furiously deny writing any major literary works in a language other than Russian (although he was quite capable of doing so); he always believed he could draw his literary material only from his native culture. Even today, among the Russian writers, artists, and intellectuals now residing in the West, there are many who did not leave voluntarily and who wish eventually to return to the Soviet Union. For them, as for Turgenev, the writer needs deep linguistic and cultural linkages with his people and the land of his birth.

Still, as Avins remarks, Soviet doctrine necessitated a substantial modification of the concept of citizenship in the Soviet state. Soviet society lives by the lie, as Solzhenitsyn has made plain, but Soviet ideologists do not share his revulsion at that thought. As a Western character in Boris Pilniak's "The Third Capital" puts it: "Russia lives by the will to wish and the will not to see; this lie I consider a deeply positive phenomenon, unique in the world." Society as a whole must live by faith in doctrine, must believe things which for the time being at least are untrue; that is a condition of Soviet citizenship. Even a nonnative could become a Soviet citizen if he accepted the regime's ideological premises. So "the new Russia," Avins writes, "with adherence to ideology a requisite of citizenship, has a troubling foreign presence at its center." Marxism, after all, is an internationalist movement; thus it is fundamentally opposed to the idea of a true national culture.

In the forthcoming issue of Chronicles of Culture:

On Conservative Modernists

"One of the most interesting things about 20th-century literature is that our best writers are not prescriptive; only the mediocre ones are full of passionate intensity. The great writers seem to have been skeptical, and to have resisted ideas. The bad ones have been violated by ideas. And their readers in the cultural bureaucracies, the media, teaching, and government, have been deeply troubled by such heterodoxy. It is enough to dislike mankind to be in their bad graces, so that even literature hundreds of years old comes to be judged for its sweetness, toleration, and light. Jonathan Swift, who was worshiped by his many friends, is now viewed as a kind of part-time psychotic while the inimitable Mailer is generally perceived to suffer only from moral generosity too hastily applied to literary form."

—from the Comment
by Ronald Berman

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The Russian writer, separated by the revolution from his cultural moorings, faced several choices. Some, like Ivan Bunin, emigrated immediately and forever remained implacable opponents of the Soviet regime. Others, such as Alexei Tolstoy and Marina Tsvetaeva, emigrated and then returned to the Soviet Union. Mikhail Bulgakov and many more tried to emigrate later, but were refused permission. There were those like Boris Pasternak who would not travel abroad at all because they feared they might be prevented from returning. Some—Solzhenitsyn, for instance—were expelled from the country against their volition. But nearly all truly creative figures during the Soviet Russian period—I exclude those who placed themselves wholeheartedly at the service of the regime as its cultural mainstays, for most of them had little talent—have thought seriously about emigrating to the West, and so have been forced to define their own attitudes toward Soviet Russian culture.

One who was always spiritually estranged from Soviet society but who would never have consented to leave her homeland was Anna Akhmatova (1889-1966), the greatest woman poet of 20th-century Russia and one of Russia's finest poets of any era. *Poems* is a brief selection of works drawn from her entire creative life, offered in new translations by Lyn Coffin, with a poet's foreword by Joseph Brodsky, one of Akhmatova's protégés in the 1960's who is now living in the United States. Coffin's translations, competently though not brilliantly done, provide a good introduction to this extraordinary woman for the English-speaking reader.

Akhmatova had published lyric poetry and made her literary mark well before the revolution of 1917. Her verse of the time was intensely emotional, simultaneously personal and impersonal, centered in the theme of unhappy love, and had an unusual sense of the specific and the concrete. A good example of her early work is a poem of three stanzas dating from 1911:

I pressed my hands together under
cover
Of my veil. 'Why are you so pale
today?'
—Because I intoxicated my lover
With numbing anguish, and drove
him away.

How could I forget? He went out,
reeling.
His mouth dreadful—twisted,
grim . . .
I ran down the stairs, not touching
the railing,
At the gate I caught up with him.

I shouted hoarsely—'It was just a
joke.
You mustn't leave me—I'd rather be
dead.'
He smiled calmly, terribly, then
he spoke:
'Don't stand out here in the wind,'
he said.

When the revolutionary terror swept across Russia, Akhmatova had as much reason as most to emigrate. She had no sympathy with the ideology of the new regime, which, moreover, executed her husband, also a first-rate poet, on charges of counterrevolutionary activity in 1921. But evidently she decided—as Carol Avins writes in discussing a woman character in a play by Yuri Olesha, who occupied a literary position much like Akhmatova's in the 1920's—"that personal happiness cannot be legitimately pursued by a Soviet citizen in her time." One should not emigrate in order to find personal fulfillment, even if that personal fulfillment consists of enjoying the freedom to write. The writer as writer must accept suffering imposed by the inability to publish, or else suffer by writing as the authorities require in moments of extreme necessity, as Akhmatova herself did in the terrible postwar Stalin years; and the writer as a person must experience the same tragedies as the most ordinary individual. More than that, Akhmatova apparently believed that the poet has an obligation to give voice to the grief which the ordinary person was incapable of expressing. That idea emerges with dreadful poignancy in a short prose foreword to Akhmatova's unusual and difficult poem "Requiem," parts of which are included in the Coffin anthology.

> In the awful years of Yezhovian horror [1936-38], I spent seventeen months standing in line in front of various prisons in Leningrad [her son had been arrested]. One day someone 'recognized' me. Then a woman with blue lips, who was standing behind me, and who, of course, had never heard my name, came out of the stupor which typified all of us, and whispered into my ear (everyone there spoke only in whispers):
>
> —Can you describe this?
> And I said:
> —I can.
>
> Then something like a fleeting smile passed over what once had been her face.

Sustained by her strong religious conviction (she died an Orthodox Christian, and was buried with the full honors of the Church) and by the memory of that "fleeting smile" on the face of a woman who knew of her only that she was a poet, Akhmatova in "Requiem" gave voice to the anguish of those who survived the great purge, of those whose loved ones were taken from them by night, often never to return. That poem stands as one of the great works of 20th-century Rus-

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sian literature. On a personal level, Akhmatova maintained contact with some of the finest writers among her contemporaries—including Mandelstam, Bulgakov, and Pasternak. They, like her, because of their literary independence, were persecuted by the regime even to death. She saw herself very much as one who stood in the great tradition of Russian poetry, in which the poet shares the suffering of his people.

Though infrequently published, Akhmatova was immensely popular among the intelligentsia: in his embittered memoirs Shostakovich recalls that when she entered the hall to give a poetry reading in Moscow the entire audience spontaneously rose to its feet in a sign of respect which could only arouse paranoia among the authorities. At the close of World War II (during which she spent some time in blockaded Leningrad), the regime allowed a selection of her works to be printed. Before it could be distributed, however, Stalin's cultural henchman Andrei Zhdanov initiated a crackdown on cultural liberalization by denouncing her as a "cross between a nun and a whore." The edition of her poems was pulped, and she fell silent for many years.

In February 1959, as an exchange graduate student at Leningrad University, utilizing entirely unofficial channels, I

became, I believe, the first Westerner to meet and talk with her since Zhdanov had laid the ban upon her. At the time the controversy over Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*—which had just been published abroad and which implicitly questioned the October Revolution—was at its height. Akhmatova's attitude toward the situation was characteristic of her. She never adopted a stance of vociferously public opposition: the whole controversy, she said, would merely lead to "grief for him and grief for us." But she was prepared to accept that grief, judging it to be necessary, and when Pasternak died the following year she paid the tribute of poetry to him:

That singular voice has stopped:
silence is complete,
And the one who spoke with forests
has left us behind.
He turned himself into a life-giving
stalk of wheat
Or the fine rain his songs can call
to mind.
And all the flowers that hold this
world in debt
Have come into bloom, come forward to meet this death.
But everything stood still on
the planet
Which bears the unassuming
name . . . the Earth. □

Of Death and Diapers

Vance Packard: *Our Endangered Children: Growing Up in a Changing World;* Little, Brown; Boston.

Susan Meyers and Joan Lakin: *Who Will Take the Children? A New Custody Option for Divorcing Mothers—and Fathers;* Bobbs-Merrill; Indianapolis.

by Bryce Christensen

Secular liberalism is the supreme doctrine of the sovereign self. As such, its failures are particularly obvious at the two end points of life, birth and death, when the limitations of the self are inevitably exposed. Though medical advances and Mediterranean cruises have reduced the humiliation of old age, death has not yet relinquished its absolute sway over the rights-bloated self. Without promising greater self-fulfillment or enhanced self-esteem, the grave continues to enforce its traditional claims, even upon the most liberated rebels against all tradition. All militantly asserted rights to choose among innovative "alternatives" disappear into a common hole in the ground. Consequently, many liberals have no idea about how to approach death, though death—the first true believer in equal opportunity—is quite sure about how to approach liberals.

By refusing to accept the strictures of religion during life, such individuals deny themselves any of its consolations concerning death, and therefore they often avoid thinking or talking about it at all. If the unpleasant topic forces itself into view, a panel of popular psychologists is summoned, whose discussion of how to "accept" death merely confirms the audience's despair and low-grade depression.

Birth, the appearance of a new self, poses its own vexing problems for liberal orthodoxy. Just as liberal doctrine assumes the immortality of the gods, it also requires the Olympian mode of reproduction: autonomous deities leaping full-grown from their fathers' foreheads. For how else can the needs of an infant or child be met by parents without sacrificing the sacrosanct autonomy of the self, especially the female self? Unable to answer this question, many self-centered Americans have either stopped having children or have refused to make sufficient sacrifices for those they do have. The result, as Vance Packard observes in *Our Endangered Children,* is "an anti-

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child culture." The birth rate in the U.S. has declined dramatically since the late 50's, while the number of deliberately "childfree" couples has skyrocketed. Californians have more cars than children, Mr. Packard explains, because "cars promise freedom and mobility; young children don't."

For Californians, as well as residents of other states, the means of producing children, sex, still ranks somewhere above cars as a means of achieving self-gratification. But thanks to contraceptives, coupling need create no lasting entanglements. And if an "accident" occurs, a little shot of saline solution will

quickly make the undesired POC ("product of conception") ready for suitable swaddling in a garbage can behind the nearest abortion mill. Both in numbers and technique, our society has so far out-heroded Herod that the Judean monarch's crude slaughter of a few hundred unwanted babies in one small locale seems almost negligible compared to the current extermination of hundreds of thousands of the unborn.

Among those babies who survive until birth, almost one-sixth are now illegitimate, usually born to teenage mothers with neither the resources nor the education to provide for their offspring. Because, as Mr. Packard notes, "there has been a decrease in the stigma attached to having an illegitimate child," few of these child-parents now elect to give their babies up for adoption into intact families. Despite all the feminist cant about "the strength of female-headed families," children born into these circumstances labor under formidable handicaps. Not only do mothers command substantially less earning power than do fathers, but studies presented by Mr. Packard prove that regardless of economic advantages, the absence of a father often causes profound emotional, psychological, and social difficulties for the child.

"... nowhere does Mr. Packard prove his thesis that our contemporary pattern of child-rearing produces anxious and lonely children who are poorly prepared for adulthood."
New York Times Book Review

Unfortunately, many of the children born to wedded couples will not be raised by those couples. Not only has the divorce rate more than doubled since 1960, but the divorce rate among couples with children has more than tripled. Parents don't stay together "for the sake of the children" anymore. Because the autonomous self now recognizes no sake but its own, rationalization comes easy: "The kids will be happier when I'm happy." Excepting the cases of an abusive parent, studies do not bear out this line of thought. Children are usually much happier growing up in an unhappy marriage, many researchers have found, than in experiencing a divorce. Young children are typically tormented by guilt and insecurity, while older children fantasize for years about Dad and Mom getting back together. According to a survey cited by Mr. Packard, one year after the event even most parents suspect that the divorce "might have been a mistake" and that perhaps they "should have tried harder."

For many parents, though, divorce is now acceptable as an easy way out of unpleasant conflicts. In some circles, it is even hailed as a courageous act of self-assertion. The consequent split-parenting is generally painful for the children, however. The courts try to be equitable in awarding custody, but the whole process is often reminiscent of a badly done magic act in which the magician saws his stagebox in half only to leave a bleeding portion of his assistant in each half. From the turn of the century until recently, courts routinely gave mothers custody of the children on the assumption that they are better nurturers than fathers. In the post-Friedan world of feminist mothers, things are different. Mr. Packard reports an alarming upswing in mothers who simply desert their families in pursuit of less constricted horizons. Others, like Susan Meyer and Joan Lakin, voluntarily surrender custody of their children upon divorce.

The authors of *Who Will Take the Children?* claim they have compiled what actually amounts to a rather disjointed collection of statements by divorced women whose children live with their fathers in order to smash the popular "stereotypes" of such women as cold and unfeeling. Actually, it would be hard to imagine a work which more fully confirms stereotypes: first comes boredom with upper-middle-class life; then involvement with a feminist consciousness-raising group; then campaigning for liberalized abortion; yoga and transcendental meditation follow; finally, the decision to part with burdensome children and a "conservative" husband. Of course, these women do profess love and concern for their children and offer some appropriately posed "anguish" over choosing to let them go. Nonetheless, it's quite apparent that their primary concern is not the happiness of those children, who become merely an "issue" to be "dealt with" on the way to the satisfaction and fulfillment of following "my own needs and desires."

In passing, Ms. Meyers and Ms. Lakin concede that the "ideal" home for children has both a mother and a father, but they are not much concerned with pre-

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serving such an ideal. They think that it is wonderful that our "culture has changed" so that "divorce is easier," and they revel in the "positive results" achieved in their own cases. Indeed, after reassuring the reader about fathers' ability to provide child care, they encourage other women in pursuit of education, professional advancement, and freedom to consider their options. Given Mr. Packard's discovery that three-fourths of single fathers feel "overwhelmed," such advice is sound only as feminist ideology. In most instances, fathers simply don't make good mothers. Antimaternalism, moreover, can only swell the already-rising tide of custody cases in which *neither* parent wants the children.

Bias against motherhood has also affected the care given children in millions of intact homes. Because of the decline in prestige accorded homemakers, many mothers take jobs without any economic pressure to do so. Their children are then left at a day-care center, typically a "warehouse for children" chosen on the basis of cost and convenience, not quality, Mr. Packard finds. Even the best centers leave emotional and social scars less frequently found on children with an at-home mother. Older children who come home from school to *M*A*S*H* reruns and frozen pizza also suffer and, in aimless destruction—for they have nothing else to do—cause suffering.

As he surveys "the modern form of damnation that confronts our children," Mr. Packard is justifiably distressed. With teenage drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, and adolescent promiscuity all at unprecedented levels, we must conclude with him that "our society is seriously malfunctioning in its role of preparing children for adulthood." But Mr. Packard's analysis of this malfunctioning is finally unsatisfying. He *knows* why we are "blighting our youngsters": he sees the damage wrought by feminism and by the "do your own thing" philosophy, and he recognizes the frightful effects of the "decline in religious belief as a force in daily living." Like too many other sociologists, though, he is so daunted by the liberal zeitgeist that he will not trust his conservative impulses enough to confront the spiritual bankruptcy of our age squarely. His concluding chapter, which emphasizes corporate and governmental policies for supporting families, is superficial and disappointing. In it he praises Sweden for its long-standing "family policy," apparently oblivious to the fact that that policy has done nothing to curb Sweden's astronomical divorce and illegitimacy rates. American efforts to help the family through state bureaucracies have so far proved just as ineffective, if not counterproductive. Certainly, the burgeoning family-assistance programs have had no visible effect upon a dismal trend curiously overlooked by Mr. Packard: adolescent suicide in the U.S. has climbed 250 percent in the last 20 years. It is up to parents, not social workers, to rectify this calamitous situation by replacing the worship of self with devotion to spouse and family. If they do not, the answer to the question "Who will get the children?" will increasingly be "The county coroner." □

Fads, Facts & Fools

Edward A. Feigenbaum and Pamela McCorduck: *The Fifth Generation: Artificial Intelligence and Japan's Computer Challenge to the World;* Addison-Wesley; Reading, MA.

David Burnham: *The Rise of the Computer State;* Random House; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

A few years ago, CB radio antennae sprouted on the roofs and trunks of autos like alien growths from an average Hollywood movie. People began to affect drawls, and instead of asking someone for his or her astrological sign, inquired about that person's "handle." Formulations like "Silver Fox," "Sugar Daddy," "Big Momma," and the like followed. When stories of vacations were recited, the going became the major topic and the arriving and staying took a pathetic second place; listeners were regaled with tales of "convoys" and "Smokeys" and "putting the hammer down." Commercial radio stations played tunes centered on the wonders of "trucking" with a CB, and Hollywood quickly cranked out a few feature films on the subject. Diet books were pushed off the shelves at bookstores and off of the racks at grocery markets by texts that included CB codes and other handy tidbits of information. The most popular channel in the country became channel 19, and it wasn't on the dial of a television. "Good buddies" everywhere knew where to tune in. If some skeptic were to mutter something about how CB's were nothing more than a step up from the fur dice that once dangled from rearview mirrors or the cats mounted on rear decks with red eyes that were lighted when the brake pedal was depressed, he was overpowered with

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stories about the value of the radios, about how the devices were instrumental in getting medical assistance to accident victims and in preventing thugs from victimizing stranded motorists. It seemed as if CB's were here to stay. But then people began to tire of asking for someone's "20" (i.e., location) and all of the "ratchet jawing" that the mere existence of a CB below a dashboard seemed to demand became an exercise in tedium. The antennae wilted as Wells's Martians expired. CB's remained where they essentially originated and where they belong: in the cabs of long-distance truck drivers.

Those clear-eyed observers who saw through the CB craze can now be heard saying similar things about home computers. And as Texas Instruments pulls out of the market (the same move it made when the flash of digital watches began to fade) and J. C. Penney stops selling home computers, the skeptics find themselves with what can be interpreted as industry support for their contention that computers are CB's by another name. To a certain extent, they are correct. While a home computer has a degree of applicability in any given household, it isn't quite the panacea that those marketing the device claim that it is. One can make a household budget with a computer, the right program, and a whole raft of figures and file recipes with peripheral memory equipment (typically an option); the same things can be done with paper and pencil, often in a more expeditious manner. Then there's the word-processing capability of home computers which, proponents claim, makes the gadgets far superior to typewriters. Word processors do have a leg up on typewriters—but how many people buy a special table on which to mount their typewriters and how many of those who do that use their typewriter with a frequency that would justify spending at least some $300 on word processing? Computerized budget-makers, recipe hoarders, and would-be Hemingways are few and far between, so the capability of playing video games without needing quarters or tokens is

touted. And lest anyone feels too sybaritic about blowing a chunk of the (non-computerized) household budget on a sophisticated toy, the admen are soothing with the claim that computers are good for the kids: they will need to be "computer literate" in the world of tomorrow that's developing today. As the dust settles on all of those high-tech keyboards and as TV's are liberated from the multicolored wires, the skeptics smile. But their satisfaction will be short-lived.

Home computers are not exactly like CB's. The faddish nature of both is the same, but the principle behind home computers (i.e., that the computer is a tool) is much more thorough and its effect will be, in the not-so-distant future, more pervasive than any technological development has been in recent memory. This is not to say that one of those little gems that comes with a rebate form is going to cause a sea change in daily living, for those devices will probably end up with the fur dice, tail-light kittys, and CB radios. As Edward A. Feigenbaum and Pamela McCorduck point out in *The Fifth Generation: Artificial Intelligence and Japan's Computer Challenge to the World*, the Japanese are in the midst of a project that, if all goes as expected, will result in computers that will make the best and brightest American devices seem somewhat retarded. What's more, the Japanese devices won't be limited to use in large organizations and industries, but will be "inexpensive and reliable enough to be used everywhere, in offices, factories, restaurants, shops, farms, and fisheries, and of course, homes." Although the title of the book sounds as bombastic as those about UFO's, pyramid power, and magic diets, there is substance to it. As the situation in the automobile industry clearly shows, the Japanese are not the mere copycats that they were once popularly characterized as being; the proverbial shoe is on the other foot. When the Japanese launch a project to enter a market, they do so with great seriousness: consider 35-mm cameras, wristwatches, stereo equipment, TV's. Now their sights are set on computers. Not only are they working on conventional types, but they are developing a more sophisticated system that could, within 10 years, make Japan the information powerhouse nonpareil.

The use of the word *Japanese* here is deliberate and is meant to signify that the effort is not being made by a single concern, not just by an Oriental IBM or Control Data Corporation. In 1982, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), that bugbear of American managers, decided to launch a project to develop what are designated fifth generation computer systems. The preceding generations are, in order: electronic-vacuum tube, transistorized, integrated circuit, and very large-scale integrated (VSLI) computers. The super-fast computers of today and the ones that are in development at the leading American companies are, mainly, VSLI types. Exactly how any of these computers operate is of little concern here. The point is simply that the Japanese government, recognizing that information processing is becoming a multibillion dollar operation, figured that Japan must solidify its position as an exporter. As it must import raw materials for manufacturing and agricultural products for eating, superior com-

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puter hardware and software are seen as ideal products—especially if they're better than those offered by anyone else. MITI organized the Institute for New Generation Computer Technology (ICOT) which is backed by Fujitsu, Hitachi, Nippon Electric Corporation, Mitsubishi, Oki, Sharp, and Toshiba; Nippon Telephone and Telegraph and MITI's Electrotechnical Laboratory are also cooperating. The effort at ICOT is to build that better computer for the 1990's.

Conventional computers are wonders at processing data and computing; they don't "think." What the Japanese aim to build is so different that it has a specific name, KIPS: Knowledge Information Processing System. Feigenbaum and McCorduck define KIPS as a computer that will have "symbolic inference capabilities, coupled with very large knowledge bases, and superb human interfaces, all combined with high processing speeds." People can argue until they are blue in the face about whether an electronic device can think or reason, about whether the concept of artificial intelligence isn't merely an escapee from science fiction pulps. (Indeed, the authors point out that Americans tend to philosophize about such matters while the Japanese are busy with engineering.) But the next generation of computers will do something that is very much like thinking, and this is not mere speculation, for currently existing "expert systems" are awfully close. Essentially, an expert system consists of a knowledge base, an inference system, and an input/output system. Using a medical analogy, Feigenbaum and McCorduck explain, "The *knowledge base* you use is what you learned in medical school and in the years of internship, residency, specialization, and practice. It's what you learn in the journals. It consists of facts, prejudices, beliefs, and perhaps most important, heuristic knowledge." Heuristics are rules of thumb, ways that a doctor, almost automatically, applies what he has in his head to the problem at hand. The reason that the system is called an *expert* system is because the facts and the heuristics are gleaned from living, breathing experts, like medical doctors. The inference system is where the "thinking" is done. The input/output system not only performs the activities that its name implies, but it also has the capability of explaining why the system as a whole came to a particular conclusion. One expert system, at the University of Pittsburgh, is called INTERNIST/CADUCEUS; it performs diagnoses in internal medicine. According to the authors, it "covers more than 80 percent of all internal medicine; its knowledge base encompasses about 500 diseases and more than 3500 manifestations of disease." Imagine what this means: a patient's history, vital signs, prescribed drugs, and other data can be entered into the system and it's likely that the correct diagnosis and treatment will be produced by the system. The further development of INTERNIST/CADUCEUS won't necessarily lead to a situation wherein physicians line up with auto workers at unemployment offices; it will permit medicine to reach areas (through remote devices) where it's currently in short supply, whether it be the outback or outer space. Other expert systems exist for fields including bioengineering, chemistry, computing, and engineering.

All of this may sound as if the skeptics are right: CB's are for truckers, and com-

Notables

Poets as the Letter O

Peter Brazeau: *Parts of a World: Wallace Stevens Remembered, An Oral Biography;* Random House; New York.

Gertrude Stein's observation about geography can be applied to Wallace Stevens as a subject for biography: There's no thought there. A biography is the rendering of a particular individual's life. While everyone knows that Stevens was a captivating poet, he, with regard to his day-to-day existence, was more a businessman, an executive at the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, than poet. Thus, details about his eating cold roast beef every Wednesday for lunch and his penchant for solitary walks are about the only things that can be drawn together. Brazeau employs the oral biography form, features monologues of people who knew Stevens. In effect, the book is merely a variation on collecting the pencil shavings of the poet: it might be fascinating stuff for scholars who would feel comfortable in the Academy of Lagado, where Gulliver watched an ancient student performing "an operation to reduce human excrement to its original food."

Whereas the life of a say, Delmore Schwartz, may be interesting given the social intercourse involved in the quotidian activities, with Stevens, the poetry's the thing. In it, the solitary, surly man is truly great. His recognition of the importance of the activity that he performed during the "other" part of his life, which he wrote about in "The Irrational Element in Poetry," is more telling than any comprehensive collection of recording tape: "it is probably the purpose of each of us to write poetry to find the good which, in the Platonic sense, is synonymous with God. One writes poetry, then, in order to approach the good in what is harmonious and orderly." □

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puters are for technologists. So far, that's correct (excepting, of course, those rogues who use their home models), but then the objective of ICOT must be considered. Certainly, it will have to further develop existing equipment and create some sizable innovations, but given the project participants, the track record of the Japanese in the various before-mentioned fields, and the fact that Japan will require new products to maintain (or surpass) its position in the world market, KIPS doesn't sound like blue-sky thinking—and as any American industrialist will acknowledge, the Japanese are extremely applications-oriented. What's more, the Japanese, given their meager natural resources, have come to recognize that it's imperative that they do more than less. One solution that they have capitalized upon is applying thinking to resources; thought takes precedence over force. The people in the country (those who really have to stretch the less) recognize this fact. As mentioned, KIPS is projected to be accessible to the home market. It could be used as a roomful of experts waiting to answer questions about subjects from astrophysics to plumbing; what's more, it will not only be able to answer questions, but will be interactive in such a way that it will help lead the questioner to formulate the right questions. On the other hand, it could be used as an arcade game to end all arcade games. It will be a tool or a toy. Those who recognize that knowledge is power will make the most of KIPS; the rest will fall behind—way behind. Feigenbaum and McCorduck are to the point: "For former flower children and other blithe spirits who crashed to earth during the economic contractions of the 1970's, the lessons Japan has to teach must seem a bit dreary: diligence, study, application, duty, responsibility, suppleness, patriotism, and playing the game with intensity." Given a home KIPS, it's not likely that a young man or woman in Japan would spend an inordinate amount of time blasting imaginary aliens with it; there seems to be a recognition that there is a bona fide country that needs defending. The same cannot be said about many in the United States.

Some of the most startling evidence of this comes through in *The Rise of the Computer State* by David Burnham. Burnham's résumé includes an employment record at UPI, *Newsweek*, CBS, and the *New York Times*. If Feigenbaum and McCorduck can be considered manic with regard to their optimism about KIPS (and, indeed, their enthusiasm ultimately makes them somewhat suspect), then Burnham can be considered depressive because of the anxiety he feels about technology: he sees it looming like some

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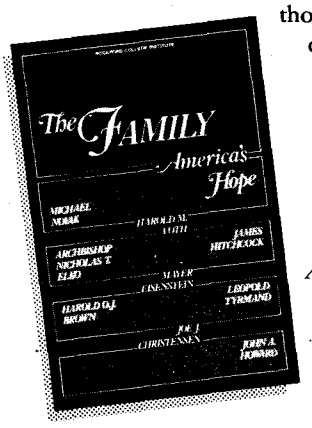
—*The Barbara M. Morris Report*



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evil creature in a Marvel comic. Although *computer* figures in the title of his book and is sprinkled throughout the pages like shards of glass that are meant to shred the feet of the barefoot innocents who traverse the course (once they're through it, they'll never want to get anywhere near the objects of Burnham's derision), virtually anything that smacks of sophistication is the enemy. CB radios are not singled out for attack, though they could be: he could figure them as a diabolical web stretching over the highways and byways, one that the State could use to ensnare unsuspecting motorists for some never-defined reasons. If it's more technologically complex than a table lamp, then it's suspect and somehow becomes a computer. For example, Burnham cites the incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II and states, "The Census Bureau data, recorded on punch cards that could be quickly tabulated by a kind of mechanical computer," was instrumental. Clearly, one is to suppose, the "data," "punch cards" and "computer" are at the heart of the matter. Somehow, the modifier "a kind of mechanical" slips by in the emotionally charged discourse. As previously mentioned, the electronic-vacuum tube computer formed the first generation. It's generally accepted that the first computer is ENIAC, which made its debut in 1946—after the war. But that doesn't stop Burnham, for he quickly moves on to indict telephones and cable television.

His thesis is that the world that George Orwell described in *1984* is aborning, that the equipment that is being put in place by organizations, utilities, hospitals, and industries will make us all readily monitored and manipulated binary digits in a Master Computer. Americans are to be gravely concerned (not thankful) that the National Security Agency has massive computers. Burnham warns, "Every day, in almost every area of culture and commerce, systems and procedures are being adopted that make it easier and easier for the NSA to dominate our society should it ever decide such action is necessary." Tacit is that it probably *will* find it necessary. Burnham rarely explains, though he always implies. One might raise a similar argument: it's dangerous to equip the U.S. Army with contemporary weapons for they will make it easier for the generals to stage a coup should they decide such action is necessary. The disturbing thing is that Burnham might agree. Burnham insists that the little guy will be helpless in the face of the computer power massed by all of the three-digit organizations (e.g., NSA, CIA, FBI, IRS, AT&T, IBM, etc.). I wonder how he explains teenage computer hackers?

"... an entertaining book, studded with anecdotes about computer-system abuses."
The New Republic

One of the most unusual things about Burnham is that he is awfully afraid of information (a condition that makes his chosen profession seem to be an odd one, until one considers his places of employ). Presumably, less skittish Americans would feel good knowing that law enforcement agencies have data—computerized or otherwise—that aid them in stopping crimes or in seeing that criminals are apprehended, that welfare agencies have the information that permits them to spot some of those who are trying to bilk the system, that the telephone company can (usually) make sure that one isn't billed for someone else's call to Pago Pago. Knowing such things scares the pants off of Burnham as well as those of Walter Cronkite, who intones in the foreword, "If—or is it when?—these computers are permitted to talk to one another, when they are interlinked, they can spew out a roomful of data on each of us that will leave us naked before whoever gains access to the information." "Whoever" is, of course, Big Brother. Not only are there numerous references to Orwell throughout the book, there is even a drawing of the big guy on the dust jacket.

Computers can be used for all sorts of

LIBERAL CULTURE

Metaphysics

Under the title "The Endearing Ms. [Shirley] MacLaine," *The Chicago Tribune* lovingly reports on the garb of the woman who inspires the minds and souls of the liberal quarter-intelligentsia:

> She was wearing an ordinary sweatsuit, stereo headphones and a T-shirt that read, 'Don't —— with me Fellas!'

Later, during the interview with a worshipping *Trib* reporter, Ms. MacLaine provides an explanation as to why she might have been compelled to word her sense of protectiveness in such a strong, strident manner:

> I think I may have been a prostitute *in another life.* □

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evil, vicious things. Computers are operated by people, and as Feigenbaum and McCorduck point out, "The intelligent machine—the knowledge information processor, the expert system, whatever—demands intelligent users." Americans can become intelligent users and support the efforts that are being made by public and private organizations to keep this country up to speed in the field of computers—not for the sake of computers, but for the support of free, healthy, and productive people, for the sake of a viable polity in the 1990's and beyond. Or, Americans can act like Burnham and Cronkite and become heirs to those who once warned about the evils of electricity. □

Schizophrenia & Politics

Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider: *The Confidence Gap: Business, Labor, and Government in the Public Mind;* The Free Press; New York.

by Daniel Dickinson

"American public opinion," Theodore Roosevelt once said, "is a vast ocean. It cannot be stirred with a teaspoon!" Since then, assorted experts have tried, with increasingly sophisticated tools, to measure the depth, length, and substance of that sea of ideas, myths, biases, and dreams which constitutes the average American's conception of himself and the world around him. To a significant extent, their purpose has been not just to measure opinion, but also to determine how it may be molded. Sometimes the pollsters have been wildly wrong. In the celebrated *Literary Digest* survey of 1936, over 2.5 *million* respondents confidently predicted the landslide victory of Alf Landon over FDR. In 1980, most of the major opinion firms anticipated a tight Presidential race. Of course, the contest was not close at all. Still, if modern polling has yet to enter the realm of exactitude, it is equally far from pseudoscientific soothsaying. Polls do present a roughly accurate picture of who we are and what we believe, so long as the proper questions are posed.

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It is for this reason that political candidates of every ideological stripe are avid followers of surveys. In fact, it is a rare candidate for any major office who does not commission polls. The extent to which one is serious about winning is often judged by the pollster he hires. If he picks Republicans Arthur Finkelstein or Dick Wirthlin, or Democrats Dave Garth or Pat Caddell, or, more accurately, if they agree to take on the candidate, columnists, opinion leaders, and political action committee coordinators then know that he is "one to watch." Without a big-time consultant, a candidate is often marked as a loser before he starts. In a very real sense, politics has developed an echo effect. That is, candidates take polls to gauge public attitudes, and then tailor their statements accordingly. The public, hearing what it already believes to be true, is thus reinforced in its preconceptions. In a way, it's a great system —for those in elective office. Despite massive public discontent with "politicians," the rate of returns for incumbents is extremely high. Everyone hates Congress, yet nearly everyone loves his congressman. As advantageous as this system may be for officeholders, it offers certain limitations for the nation as a whole. Built into the public-opinion system is an inherent discrimination against those with independent ideas, vision, or innovative approaches, those people a nation has need of in times of social and economic crisis.

If any American political leader in recent times has exemplified both the strengths and weaknesses of government by survey, that individual was Jimmy Carter. Possibly the most intellectually able President since Hoover, Carter was undoubtedly the most skilled in the use of polling, and the media to sell himself and his program to the American public. So obvious was Carter's manipulation of public attitudes that a famed series of "Doonesbury" strips had a Carter-appointed "image" consultant advising the President on what to wear. In the end, it was Carter's skill at reading the people that led, at least in part, to his political downfall. Since the public is notorious for its inability, in the long term, to ally itself to any firm set of policies, the Carter Administration found itself drifting between often contradictory policy alternatives in such important areas as economic policy, energy, Central America, and the Soviet Union. Responding to public disgust with the "Imperial" Nixon Presidency, Carter started his tenure by encouraging his staff to take a folksy, feet-on-the-desk approach to governance. Later, reacting to polls suggesting that he did not project authority, Carter ended up conducting his 1980 primary campaign from the Rose Garden while the White House band

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played endless renditions of "Hail to the Chief." To the average voter, it was confusing.

Perhaps it was because Carter was so uniquely sensitive to the implications of the polls that he was the first major public figure to publicly articulate a concern that had occurred to many who make it their business to study the attitudes of the American people. Finding, in the summer of 1979, that his Presidency was a shambles, that inflation and interest rates were soaring, and that his popularity was the lowest of any recent President, Carter retreated to the solitude of Camp David, where he met with national leaders, columnists, government officials, and authorities. When Carter came down from the mountain on July 15, he gave a speech that was undoubtedly the most controversial of his career. In the address he considered:

> a subject even more serious than energy or inflation . . . a fundamental threat to American Democracy . . . [There is] a crisis of confidence that strikes at the very soul and spirit of our national will . . . The gap between our citizens and our government has never been wider.

Carter attributed this "crisis of confidence" to a national "malaise," and, by implication, blamed the failure of his Presidency on a lack of popular trust and support. Predictably, the public blamed their lack of support on Carter's ineptitude. In fact, the backlash from the speech was so great that it, along with inflation and Iran, contributed mightily to Carter's electoral failure in the following year. But, was Carter right—has confidence in basic institutions disappeared? And, if so, what does this portend for the survival of our economic and political systems?

In *The Confidence Gap,* prominent public-opinion experts Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider take a look at 40 years of survey research to determine if America is beset by a "malaise." Some disquieting conclusions emerge.

During the 1950's and early 60's, support for nearly all of America's major institutions was quite high. Peace and prosperity engendered high levels of respect for business, churches, government, and the media. In more ways than economically, the 1950's were a golden age for most Americans. Late in the 60's, however, storm clouds appeared, and continued through the 70's. Roosevelt's "vast ocean" was stirred, not by teaspoons but by mighty hurricanes: political assassinations, race riots, Watergate, and Vietnam. And the mass media were on-the-spot, exploding the deaths of statesmen and Marines in lurid colors to viewers across the land. Wherever there was conflict, bloodshed or protest, CBS and its typographic associates were there. The good news, where it existed, was seldom good copy.

The results were predictable enough. As the bad news and troubles mounted, people turned off. They turned off on business, on religion, on unions and government—in short, on all the institutions that they perceived had failed them. The extent of this alienation is appalling. In 1965, nearly two-thirds of the public expressed confidence in business. Today, only one-sixth of the population does. An even smaller percentage has faith in labor unions, while 61 percent says that something is "morally wrong" with the country. Participation in government has decreased significantly, and feelings of political powerlessness have increased even more dramatically. Currently, two-thirds of the public believes that what they think "really doesn't count." Nearly the same margin endorses the idea that "people with power" are out to take advantage of them. And, in what may be the most telling evidence of the depth of popular cynicism, a *majority* of those surveyed in a 1978 Yankelovich, Skelly and White poll felt that both "big businessmen" and "labor leaders" were "generally immoral and unethical."

If perceptions such as these existed in a vacuum, they'd be bad enough. Unfortunately, as the late Richard Weaver put it, "ideas have consequences." To the extent that citizens feel powerless, to the degree that they're distrustful of those institutions which are supposed to provide meaning and dimension to their lives, the world that they act within and upon will be affected in manifold and subtle ways. Within the political system, for example, pollsters have discerned the emergence of an almost schizoid public persona in recent years. Upon the selection of a new President—Carter, Ford, Reagan; it hardly matters who—confidence in nearly all institutions rises. Within months, as the current man on a white horse proves to be a mere mortal, his ratings plummet while credence in other institutions sinks as well. This Janus-headed popular approach extends into public policy. During the Afghanistan invasion, people demanded more defense spending and military superiority. A short time later, in referendums across the nation, many people supported a nuclear freeze. Similarly, citizens tell pollsters that they favor "less government spending," while endorsing more tax support for medicine, education, social security, and pollution control. People, it appears, will not be satisfied. Nor will they be patient. This makes the task of governance difficult for any administration.

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Even so, the problem of the "confidence gap" extends far beyond difficulties in the political sphere. The Great Divorce between the American people and American institutions has sent reverberations throughout the nation. Its echoes are reflected in the significant increase in job dissatisfaction over the last decade, in our productivity decline, in low voter turnouts, in falling church memberships, and in the rise of mysticism and cults. Accordingly, the pervasive sense of alienation, the implicit breakdown of America's traditionally Burkean compromise between limited government, personal independence, and strong institutions, has turned some minds to the drawing of parallels. Are we, after all, perched on the edge of social and political catastrophe? Is ours, perhaps, the fate of Weimar Germany or prerevolution France?

Happily, if the polls cited in *The Confidence Gap* may be relied upon, the answer must still be "no." If Americans react negatively to their institutions, or more accurately, to the *leadership* of their institutions, they still strongly support the philosophical underpinnings of the American system. As much as the public may distrust business, free enterprise itself is almost universally admired. As despised as the unions are, most Americans would rather have them around than do without them. And while about half the population doesn't bother to vote, nearly everyone believes he should.

Despite this vote of confidence where it most counts, it's incumbent on all those in positions of leadership in today's institutions not to be complacent. If the system itself remains sound, the fact of public disapproval can have disastrous consequences for those businesses, unions, and government agencies unable to bridge the chasm of distrust. Possibly because it is more directly affected by public pressure, business responded early to the "confidence crisis," largely through its image-boosting "public service" ad programs. Unfortunately, such commercials are often perceived by the public as examples of corporate greed, so they've produced limited results. More recently, businesses have tried to fight alienation with participation, its natural antidote. In factories across the land, both work-related "quality circle" programs, which include workers in management decisions, and employee-awareness programs, which communicate essentials about private enterprise, are catching on and yielding results. Unions, too, are beginning to react. Some of the more progressive ones are starting to work with management to encourage both cooperation and production, formerly two goals far removed from the interests of the union leadership. In government also antialienation efforts can be discerned. In essence, President Reagan's "New Federalism" program is an attempt to move government closer to the people, thus enhancing popular participation in the decision-making process. Significantly, this concept was the single Republican proposal most favored by voters during the 1980 Carter-Reagan presidential debate. Should that tell us something?

Any problem—disease, social condition, or marital dispute—that is not thoughtfully tended to usually gets worse. As Browning said of quite a different subject but in a relevant context:

> When faith and hope are gone the man is dead.

For Americans, hope for the future is diminished, if not quite gone. Faith in our leadership is lacking. Faith in the soundness of our basic political and economic structures remains. If we are unable to restore hope, if we are unable to believe in those around us, that basic faith itself will soon come under attack. If it does, the "confidence gap" will quickly become the "confidence crisis." Given his slavish devotion to epitomizing the public will at any given moment, it's ironic that Jimmy Carter said it best:

> What can we do? First of all, we must face the truth and change our course. . . . Restoring that faith and that confidence to America is now the most important task we have. □

The Crisis of Controlled Thinking

Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair: *A General's Life;* Simon and Schuster; New York.

by Stephen J. Sniegoski

General of the Army Omar N. Bradley's military career spanned a half-century of dramatic change for the United States. When he entered West Point in 1911, the United States had few military interests beyond its borders; when he retired in 1953, American military commitments stretched around the world. And Bradley lived to participate in decisions that were the seeds of America's global decline.

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Bradley's personal status rose in tandem with his country's military might. He came from a militarily inauspicious background: as a child he lived in near-poverty in rural Missouri, attended one-room schools, and only belatedly decided to seek entrance into the Military Academy. (His acceptance was made possible only by the prime candidate's failure to pass the entrance examinations.) Although stationed in the United States during World War I and thus deprived of the combat experience advantageous for military promotion, Bradley rose steadily, if uneventfully, in the peacetime army by dint of hard work and a powerful patron—General George C. Marshall, the bête noire of the American right of the 1940's and early 1950's because of his role in the alleged Pearl Har-

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bor conspiracy, the fall of Nationalist China, and other misdeeds.

World War II gave Bradley the opportunity to step into the limelight. After performing skillfully as a battlefield general in North Africa and Sicily, he led American troops in the D-Day invasion of France and eventually commanded 1.3 million troops in Europe, the largest single field command in United States history. After World War II, Bradley was Chief of Staff of the Army (1948-49) and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (1949-1953).

From the onset of World War II until his military retirement in 1953, Bradley was involved in events of great historical importance. Among the issues covered by this work (which is a collaborative effort between Bradley and the military historian Clay Blair, written in an autobiographical style, though completed after Bradley's death in 1981) are discussions of the Allies' reliance on the code-breaking Ultra, which tapped into German radio communications (and remained secret until the 1970's); the strife between British and American military commanders regarding overall Allied war strategy; and the post-World War II debate over the unification of the United States armed services. But the most significant issues are two Cold War controversies that split conservatives and liberals, and helped to account for the magnitude of the Soviet threat the West faces today. The first involved Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower's strategic decision in the spring of 1945 (which Bradley helped to formulate) to halt the Anglo-American armies on the Elbe River rather than push eastward and capture Berlin and other east European territory before the Soviet Army did. Winston Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff had strongly argued for an eastward advance, holding that it would give the West a strong bargaining position from which to demand that the Soviet Union abide by the agreements on territorial control which it was already violating. (The Yalta Agreement had been made in February 1945.) In short, Churchill and the British were thinking in terms of the postwar balance of power; it was now apparent to many observers that the Soviet Union intended to control those areas "liberated" by the Red Army. Eisenhower and Bradley, however, only considered immediate military objectives—the crushing of German forces with minimal loss of American and British lives. From this strictly military standpoint, bombed-out Berlin, which faced imminent Soviet capture, was of no strategic value. Of greater concern was to thwart rumored German "redoubts" —last-ditch resistance by fanatical nazis in heavily fortified areas in the Alps.

It must be granted that the Eisenhower-Bradley military strategy was in accord with the overriding Rooseveltian focus —to destroy Germany as a military power ("unconditional surrender," the Morgenthau Plan to deindustrialize that country) and to cooperate with the Soviet Union as "policemen" in the postwar world. The real question, however, is whether the Rooseveltian view was in accord with reality. Those who perceive the Soviet Union as a threat to the West would have to answer with a resounding *no*. Obviously, the United States should have attempted to frustrate Soviet control of Eastern and Central Europe (the domination of which has been fundamental in augmenting Soviet power); sending the Anglo-American armies beyond the Elbe would have done this.

To some degree, Bradley can be excused for neglecting geopolitical objectives in 1945, since his job was fundamentally a military one. Later, however, as Army Group Commander, Bradley should have been cognizant of geopolitical issues. He could have at least suggested a more geopolitically oriented strategy, even if the White House would not have accepted it. But in this work, written over three decades after the war's termination, Bradley states that he remained convinced that the strategy pursued was proper.

Ironically, while Bradley looked at the Berlin issue solely in terms of military factors, when the scene shifted to the Truman-MacArthur controversy during the Korean War, when Bradley was Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he excoriated General Douglas MacArthur, commander of United Nations (though principally American) forces in Korea, for allegedly focusing on military objectives to the exclusion of geopolitical ones. After massive Communist Chinese intervention in November 1950, MacArthur proposed measures to attack the Red Chinese in their "privileged sanctuary" in Manchuria. The Truman Administration, with Bradley's advice, rejected this on the grounds that "widening" the war beyond Korea would lead to Soviet intervention, including a possible invasion of Western Europe.

Although the likelihood of Soviet intervention on a global scale was highly questionable, it must be conceded that Truman's Korean stalemate strategy conformed to the framework of containment, America's grand strategy during the Cold War. The real question, however, is whether containment was sufficient to defend the West. Containment allowed only measures to protect noncommunist countries from the spread of communism; strictly proscribed were any actions to weaken communism in those areas it already controlled. Almost

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from its inception, containment's critical flaws were pointed out by astute observers such as James Burnham and Robert Strausz-Hupé. They noted that containment could never fulfill its defensive purpose: leaving communists free at home to consolidate their rule and develop a gigantic war-making machine enabled them to devote their energies full-time to external aggression. Because of the solely defensive nature of containment, every American victory could be overturned in the future, while every defeat was permanent. To be successful, containment had to win every engagement—a virtual impossibility.

The critics proved correct. For a quarter of a century the United States pursued a strategy of containment; Soviet power inevitably expanded worldwide, while Western power concomitantly retracted. Had the United States pursued MacArthur's strategy, communism would not have been struck an immediate deathblow, but the tactic would have been a precedent for further offensive Western action that, at the very least, would have meant that the West would not enter 1984 facing the dire threat it now does.

It must be stressed that there is nothing unusual about Bradley's views on these two issues, which, in fact, conform to the standard historical interpretation of the events. And the standard interpretation is, naturally, that of orthodox liberalism. (New Left accounts would view Bradley's position as unnecessarily anti-Soviet and anticommunist.) Liberalism's view toward the Soviet Union and other communist states on foreign-policy issues is predicated upon its fundamental view of communism. While acknowledging some (though far from all) of communism's brutal practices, the liberal still views its fundamental goals to be beneficent. Therefore, the liberal is psychologically unable to interpret the actions of the Soviet Union and other communist countries as really threatening to the West; consequently, he never sees the need for a strong response.

While most Americans have never accepted liberalism's underlying assumptions—the essential beneficence of communism—they often do accept the liberal line on specific foreign-policy issues, because the liberal line is the dominant one, the one publicized by "experts." Undoubtedly, this was the case with Bradley, who, while he was not a conservative (he supported the New Deal), evinced strong hostility to communism and had an abiding faith in American society. Bradley sincerely opposed the Sovietization of Eastern Europe and desired the liberation of all of Korea. But, Bradley was a man of little reflection who had a limited intellectual background. His intellectual talents did not far transcend the military realm, and even there he tended to rely on conventional military tactics; he was not innovative. In most cases, the proper application of conventional military tactics brought about victory on the battlefield. But in the foreign-policy realm, accepting the conventional wisdom meant the acceptance of the arguments of orthodox liberalism, which prevailed even in high military circles because of the influence of General George C. Marshall.

It is instructive to contrast Bradley's character with that of his contemporary, General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur was an individual of wide-ranging genius. He excelled in the roles of scholar, diplomat, ruler, military commander, and administrator. In the military realm, MacArthur was not just the practitioner of conventional tactics and strategy, but an innovator as well. One example of this, covered in this work, was his Inchon landing during the Korean War, which the conventional Bradley decried as the "wildest kind of military plan." To Bradley, its success was inexplicable—"the luckiest military operation in history." The independent-thinking MacArthur, of course, repudiated the tenets of liberal orthodoxy.

It would seem to be a fact of nature that the bulk of humanity, even most of its leaders, tend to be more like Bradley than like MacArthur, unreflectively following the conventional wisdom. Thus, today we see millions of patriotic, anticommunist Americans unthinkingly parroting nuclear-freeze statements and calling for the abandonment of Central America. Even staunchly conservative politicians, upon achieving high office and thus more forcefully bombarded by liberal ideas, accede to the liberal position on specific matters. Because of liberalism's dominance of intellectual discourse, only reflective thinkers (and a small number of innate nay-sayers) reject its messages. Obviously, America's very survival today rests upon more MacArthurs and fewer Bradleys in positions of leadership. Unfortunately, this development seems unlikely. □

In the Mail

***Seven Decisive Battles of the Middle Ages* by Joseph Dahmus; Nelson-Hall; Chicago.** Everybody knows what happened in 1066. The next time conversation lags at a cocktail party, readers of this book can bring up 451 (Chalons: Aetius and pals versus Attila), 636 (Yarmuk: the Arabs versus the Byzantines), and four others.

***The Waltz of the Shadows* by Magda Herzberger; Philosophical Library; New York.** Poesy by a Romanian who lives in Iowa about her experiences in nazi concentration camps.

***Survey: A Journal of East & West Studies*, edited by Leopold Labedz; Autumn-Winter 1983, Volume 27; *Survey* Ltd. and the Institute for European Defence & Strategic Studies; London.** In this issue, *Survey* notes the passing of some of its friends and contributors, including: Raymond Aron, Henry Jackson, Arthur Koestler, Jiri Lederer, and Leonard Schapiro. Few journals can claim such associates.

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COMMENDABLES

Facing the Mystery of Faith

Brian Moore: *Cold Heaven;*
Holt, Rinehart & Winston; New York.

by Carson Daly

That the supernatural is alive and well is the animating principle of Brian Moore's tour de force *Cold Heaven.* He makes no attempt to rob this idea of its force by invoking the mantic arts or the favorite occult ploys of the horror movie (ESP, poltergeists, werewolves), nor does he use the supernatural like an exotic literary spice to enliven a detective story, to season a gothic romance, to enhance the terror quotient of a horror story, or to add a little je ne sais quoi to a fictionalized case study of dementia. Moore's approach suggests that the supernatural can and does invade the most secular lives absolutely unbidden. In *Cold Heaven* the supernatural puts on a no-holds-barred, full-dress performance of stunning magnitude: Marie Davenport—actively hostile to religion, Catholicism especially—is accosted by a vision of the Virgin Mary and plagued by recurrent dreams of the vision in which the Virgin asks Marie to build a shrine to her in Carmel, California, where the vision occurs. Moore does not treat this vision, as most modern novelists would, as a ghost, an hallucination, a hoax, or as a psychoanalytic symptom to be cured. His character takes the apparition seriously, although the heroine would prefer madness to belief in such an unsettling reality.

Her struggle not to believe and not to obey the request made in the vision generates tension that is greatly augmented by the fact that "the other side" seems to be arranging spectacular displays of its uncanny power. Among the most perplexing and frightening of these are the events that occur in the Davenports' lives exactly one year after the vision. Key is the apparent death and subsequent disappearance of Marie's husband.

The remainder of *Cold Heaven* deals with Marie's attempt to find out whether her husband is alive or dead, to discover where he is, if he is alive, and to understand the relationship between his death and seeming resurrection and the vision at Carmel. From the beginning of the story, "when she remembered as though a bell tolled a knell, that today was the anniversary of Carmel," until the end when she finally decides "No guns were trained from on high,

ready to shoot her down," *Cold Heaven* describes her attempt to come to grips with the supernatural and with its role in her life.

Cold Heaven probably derives its greatest aesthetic impact from a disarmingly simple fact: it treats the supernatural seriously and, as a result, taps some of the uncanny power, and profundity attached to it. The doll-like Madonna in the chapel with the button eyes; the earthquake which breaks items in the convent giftshop; the priest clad in purple and green Izod golfing clothes; and even a fat jogger's unsolicited advice are all made more significant not only because they may offer Marie a clue to the way out of her predicament, but also because they may symbolize the divine will.

Although current wisdom dictates that religion detracts from the inherent interest of an object, setting, or character, in *Cold Heaven* the reverse is true. The more that an individual or object seems associated with the holy, the more fascinating he, she, or it becomes. Marie, for example, would be quite boring if she had not had her vision. Her husband would be just another workaholic pathologist if he were not involved in his wife's supernatural story.

In instinctively shying away from the aspects of his story that the typical best-seller would have emphasized, Moore seems to have realized that holiness is far more fascinating than evil. He does not, for instance, concentrate on the Davenports' marital woes; explicitly describe an affair Marie was having; dissect the decay of her lover's marriage; capitalize on the power and prestige of the husband's job as a pathologist working on top-secret projects; or exploit the gory details of his accidental death. The aesthetic success of this welcome departure from the usual formula of the successful novel proves Moore's instinct correct. Marital infidelity, illicit affairs, power, prestige, and egotism pale in comparison with the interest and suspense generated by Marie's vision. In *Cold Heaven* almost no one can be seriously interested in any of these other things.

Even passing allusions to others who have had visions of the Virgin Mary become interesting to the reader: none more so

than that of Alphonse Toby de Ratisbonne, about whom a young priest tells Marie when she angrily asks him why she has been picked to see this vision. "'I can't find any case where this Virgin appeared to someone like me,'" she argues. "'Isn't that true?'" But he replies:

> 'Sorry, no, that's not right. There was a man called Alphonse Toby Ratisbonne, in 1842. He wasn't a believer. In fact, he was an Alsatian Jew . . . a relative of the Rothschilds, as a matter of fact . . . Ratisbonne went into the Church of St. Andrea delle Frate in Rome, purely to admire the architecture, but when he was inside the church he had a vision of the Virgin. And although he was a Jew and an unbeliever, he was completely convinced. He converted at once to Catholicism, became a monk, and when he died he was the head of a religious order.'

Predictably, Marie replies, "'But what if he hadn't been convinced? Aren't there any cases like that?'" The priest's response, "'if the cases weren't reported, how would we know about them,'" suggests the entrancing possibility that such appearances may be rather common, but what may be uncommon is the response of people

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like Bernadette Soubirous, Catherine Laboure, and the children at Fatima.

After Marie has turned her back on such a response, she consoles herself that "the truths altered to fit the legend of those who had survived." Despite her alteration of the truth to fit her "survival," deliverance from the danger of conversion, and escape from sanctity, the whole strength of *Cold Heaven*, testifies that truths do not alter to fit the victor's wishes, although the so-called victor may wish to alter them. The unaltered truth suggests instead that the engagement seemingly ended between grace and evil is always about to recommence; the apparent peace is only the silence before the battle is joined; the ostensible truce is in reality merely the postponement of conflict. If this book leaves the reader with one assurance, it is that spiritual warfare can erupt in the most unexpected circumstances under the most unforeseen conditions. What *Cold Heaven* cannot tell the reader, however, is how he will react if it does—whether he will be an Alphonse de Ratisbonne or a Marie Davenport. That is a choice that not even the supernatural influences of a *Cold Heaven* will dictate. □

Of Strife and Speeches

Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr.: *A New Birth of Freedom: Lincoln at Gettysburg;* Little, Brown; Boston.

On November 19, 1863, after Edward Everett had completed a now-forgotten oration of almost two hours at the dedication of a national cemetery on one of the Civil War's bloodiest battlefields, Abraham Lincoln rose to deliver "a few remarks." His speech of 271 words lasted about two minutes, and Lincoln was certain

that it was a "failure," sure to fulfill its own prediction: "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." However, as a simple but eloquent affirmation of unifying American ideals, the Gettysburg Address has been long remembered by the citizens of a nation reunited through the vision and integrity of its author. By providing a definitive study of that address, complete with numerous photographs and the complete text of all extant versions of the address, Philip Kunhardt, Jr. has performed an invaluable service.

Nonetheless, as a thoughtful reader compares Lincoln's immortal speech and the cause for which it was the fitting summation with the proclamations issuing from contemporary political movements, the contrast is troubling. Whereas for Lincoln the proposition that "all men are created equal" meant simply the end of slavery and the natural equality of men, white and black, before the law, modern demagogues preach a radical and inconsistent egalitarianism which uses the law as a coercive tool for creating quotafied unequals before the law. Lincoln endangered his political career by declaring that no nation could endure as a "house divided" and then led America through a torturous, fratricidal conflict to reunite the states on a common foundation of freedom and equality. But modern politicos advance their own narrow in-

terests by championing chaotic "pluralism" which acknowledges no value center. Indeed, one of the bitter ironies that makes a reading of the Gettysburg Address unsettling is the fact that few areas of the country outside of the defeated Confederate States now respond to, or even understand, his appeal, expressed in near-biblical style, for a "nation under God." Because the notion of unity *under* anyone, even God, is noxious to many self-assertive Americans, we are probably an even more hopelessly divided people now than we were in 1861. Even as Federal machinery imposes ever more quantified regulations upon states, businesses, and schools, the shared ethical, political, and religious heritage which defines a living community finds fewer and fewer manifestations. With malice towards millions and charity towards a few other partisans, Americans now glare at each other out of the trenches dug on opposite sides of abortion, nuclear arms, busing, homosexuality, immigration, ecology, and a dozen other explosive questions. On some of these issues, as on slavery, the room for compromise is narrow and the no-man's-land is wide. Fierce contests seem inevitable for some time to come. Let us hope that these battles produce no cemeteries but instead opportunities for new Lincolns to announce yet another "new birth of freedom" in a more firmly united land. (BC). □

Initiate Abroad

Henry James: *A Little Tour in France;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Mark Twain was so disgusted by the superficial and sentimental nonsense in most American travel books that he said he wanted to eat "a tourist for breakfast." But instead of devouring American tourists he delightfully caricatured their bungling stupidity, their romantic misconceptions, and their boorish provincialism in *Innocents Abroad.* This is all quite amusing until one realizes how slight Twain's caricature often is and how much serious damage America's unofficial ambassadors continue to inflict upon our international image through their arrogant insensitivity as they circle the globe collecting souvenirs for themselves and dispensing insults to foreigners.

Henry James was an American tourist of a superior sort. As is evident in this centennial reprint of his *A Little Tour in France,* he caught nuances as he traveled rather than accumulating knick-knacks. Best known for his subtle fictional explorations of Paris, James wrote *A Little Tour* to record his observant explorations of the French provinces, a region James regarded as "discovered, or at least revealed, by Balzac." Though this book is not so substantive nor as carefully crafted as his novels, James's deft attentiveness to detail marks him as a worthy follower of the great French realist. Seventeen years after publishing the first edition of this work, James deprecatingly described it as merely "the perception of surface" which evaded "very complex underlying matters." But for someone as steeped in French language and culture as James, the "surface" is far thicker than it is for most. Indeed, when the first chapter

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opens with "We good Americans," the reader can only wish that more Americans deserved to be included with James in his pronoun. □

Rara Avis in Terris

Max Black: *The Prevalence of Humbug and Other Essays;*
Cornell University Press; Ithaca, NY.

One of the moderately interesting—and ultimately most annoying—things that one can do with a home computer is to put it into a GOTO loop. That is, a program is a series of steps. To make a loop, the final instruction is to *go* back *to* the first step. This will happen over and over and

over again. Similarly, children often get into a GOTO loop, but in their case it takes the form of the repetition of "Why?" Give them one answer, and they'll ask it again and again and again. Finally, just as one punches the QUIT button on the keyboard, one is forced to say, "Because I said so, that's why!" One of the more trying questions that can arise in putatively adult discourse and lead to computer or child-like looping is "Why should I be rational?" Certainly, the universe doesn't seem to be exactly rational—at least that's what quantum physicists, Einstein notwithstanding, tell us—and on a more microscopic level, that of individuals functioning in society, it seems that those who act selfishly, meanly, sybaritically, and otherwise nonrationally (calculatingly, yes, of course) often have their cake, caviar, champagne, etc., and get to consume them, too. Max Black, Cornell University's sensible philosopher (and thus a rare bird), has a suitable answer to the question, one that essentially says: because rationality is a defining characteristic of a human being, and if you don't want to be one, then that's your business. Black also delves into similarly vexing matters with such a verve that he makes one ready to consider looking at Wittgenstein through his companion to the *Tractatus*. □

IN FOCUS

The Reel World & the Real One

Michael Chester: *Robots: Facts Behind the Fiction;*
Macmillan; New York.

by Peter Fripp

An associate, a PR representative for a leading manufacturer of industrial robots, did what fathers are wont to do when their children come home from school with projects, in this case for a science fair: he gave his daughter some assistance. Given his vocational interest, he suggested that they build a mock-up of an industrial robot. They made use of the swiveling base of an old bar stool for the base of the robot, attached an ordinary cardboard packing box to act as the "body," then used an empty wrapping paper tube for

the arm. The result resembled a crude cannon more than R2D2. The pièce de résistance to the fourth-grade affair was the rolling caster from a secretarial chair. It was placed at the end of the tube, where the "hand" would be located. Thus, the contraption could swivel 360° on its base and it had axes of motion where, as it's known in robot jargon, its "end effector," or tool, would be affixed. The father gained tears for his efforts: the little girl came home from school, snivelling, and choked out the message that her teacher told her that it wasn't a robot because it didn't look like (yes) R2D2. In facilities not far, far away but as near as the closest industrial park, there are real, live robots whirring and whooshing and working. They resemble cannons and praying mantises and prostheses. The anthropomorphic ones are, by and large, confined to those buildings known as toy stores.

Robots by Michael Chester is, according to the publisher, supposed to be for humans from ages 10 to 14. That is somewhat deceptive. When it comes to matters concerning high technology—whether it be associated with sophisticated weapons systems or run-of-the-mill (in the Blakean sense of *mill*) robots—there are vast numbers of persons who have mental ages in that range: the elementary school teacher, for one. (The image of what she told her class the day after *The Day After* aired on TV makes my flesh crawl: "According to our leading scientists, the consequences of a nuclear attack would be . . . .") Mr. Chester's approach is correct: he attempts to provide a primer for those who will inherit a world rife with automation. However, he doesn't seem to have done his homework, for he gives a great deal of attention to what are relatively insignificant products in the real world and scant notice to the computerized muscles that are now making a difference. Remarkably, in this book of *Facts Behind the Fiction*, he doesn't even mention the Henry Ford of robots, Joseph F. Engelberger (the purists call George Devol the real father of the industrial robot, but he's missing, too). What's more, he asserts that the "creative and playful urge just to see what can be done has always been one of the main forces—perhaps the single most important force—behind progress in science and

engineering," which reduces the scientific and engineering community to a bunch of dotty old tinkerers who play at Pinocchio—and from there it's one step to R2D2. However, some portions of his book—the "Twenty-One-Statement List on Computer Technology," in particular—are valuable. Adolescents have been known to sneak a peek at taboo

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reading material on magazine racks; perhaps some adults will take a cue and make some furtive glances in the juvenile section of book shops. □

From Berlin to Beirut

Amos Oz: ***In the Land of Israel;*** Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; San Diego.

According to numerous speculative historians and novelists, Hitler did not die in a Berlin bunker almost 40 years ago. He escaped, they theorize, to Brazil —or Argentina, or Paraguay, or New Mexico, or the South

Pacific. Explaining away the remains medically identified as Hitler's so as to give plausibility to these fantasies is a task best left to the experts at the *National Enquirer,* but identifying and evaluating the corpses of the ideas and cultural formulations that went up in flames with the führer's defeat is a task for anyone who would understand the late 20th century. For only such philosophical autopsies can clarify the ideas and cultural developments that Hitler inadvertently helped make both possible and necessary.

Mingled with the smoke from Hitler's cremation were not only the ashes of six million Jews as individuals but also of the Diaspora as a cultural and historical phenomenon. Out of those ashes arose the phoenix of a new nation, Israel, created and unified by the newly empowered political vision of Zionism. But the future of that state is now dubious in part because the concept of an ideologically unified and militarily powerful nation was badly scorched on the fascist bier—at least in the West. In the Soviet Union, where totalitarianism was far more firmly entrenched than in the Third Reich and where anti-Semitism continues to be a state doctrine, this concept of the armed state united by doctrine was carefully preserved in the fireproof safe behind the iron curtain. On this side of the curtain, however, where free men had willingly united to defend the humane ideals defined by Judeo-Christian ethics and parliamentary tradition, noxious smoke from Fortress Europe still gets in the eyes of many. Indeed, now anyone who does not categorically champion value-free pluralism over normative conformity nor headlong disarmament over vigilant might will probably be smeared with polemical suet (drawn in swastikas) by those who do. Accordingly, with the unbounded support of the Politbureau, Arab terrorists have somehow persuaded some Westerners that because Israel has demonstrated unity of purpose and disciplined power, it must therefore be "nazi." (Never mind that the PLO is preparing to complete the Holocaust.)

But unlike its implacable foes, Israel is a democracy, with no führer (nor ayatollah) to lead it in battle and no Gestapo to enforce internal discipline. So far, racial and cultural ties and the common threat of Arab aggression have provided a consensus wide enough to make democracy workable, yet narrow enough to inculcate fighting rigor. Judging by Amos Oz's *In the Land of Israel,* that consensus is unraveling. A talented novelist and essayist who has fought in two of Israel's wars, Mr. Oz lays bare the growing tensions in Israel between European and Asian Jews, religious and secular, right and left, intellectuals and laborers, hawks and doves. Ballots have ceased to be simply expressions of preference and have become weapons in an internecine war: the epithet "nazi" flies too frequently be-

tween Israelis. Though Mr. Oz indicts messianic religionists and the militant right for failing to cultivate "pluralism as a desirable condition," Israel's real problem, as he himself sees, is not the lack of diversity but the disappearance of national agreement. The pre-Six Day War unanimity on crucial issues, he shows, has not survived and desperately needs to be renewed. Since Mr. Oz's own gospel of secular and pacifist humanism is too contentless and sterile to effect such a renewal, the reader can only hope that someone else in Israel can still find a balm in Gilead for healing breaches. If not, a noble but bitterly divided people may soon join both Hitler and their ancestors among the cinders. (BC) □

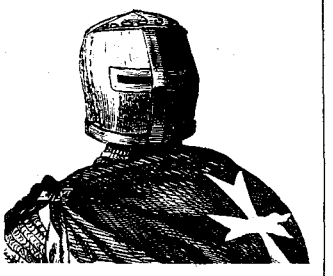
Onwords & Backwords

Samuel Beckett: ***Worstword Ho;*** Grove Press; New York.

Raymond Federman: ***The Twofold Vibration;*** Indiana University Press; Bloomington.

Beckett continues. While there has been a sense of ending from the beginning, the pauses, as he nears 80, seem . . . felt, not studied. Genuine. The words emerge, repeat, proliferate, press onward, enjamb, stall, renew, yet . . . are arthritic. But come. The man who has forever been seen as a harbinger of darkness and vacuum here becomes transparently clear about the grin: *Worstword Ho.* No exclamation mark. Still moving toward, around, or through a joke. Not Perelman exactly. But not unlike him, either. Beckett has loosened thousands of words into the void. Is it less a void when the words pile up (and are buttressed by hundreds of scholarly books and papers . . . and essays), or a greater one? What becomes of impedimenta? Can the writer stop, cease, desist, or do the reverberations from a trembling hand continue on to the unimaginable, through the unknowable? Can something be unsaid? Beckett continues. There will be no stop. Until the end.

Epigones, alas, try to carry on that which need not be toted. Federman attempts the lading. He knows them: Mercier, Malone, Murphy. The breathing of *How It Is* is studied. The



flourishes of *Proust* delineated. He thinks what can be. But it isn't. The words come, then disappear. They're not vaporized. They linger and reverberate,

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knocking images about as if they are subatomic quarks. (Joyce to the world, the word remains.) Alas. Counterfeit echoes, unheard, of a silent man who sits in a room and writes. □

Perceptibles

James Atkinson: *Martin Luther: Prophet to the Church Catholic;* Paternoster/William B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, MI.

During the past year, Catholic scholars and writers have spoken with unwonted warmth and approbation of the German monk who initiated the Reformation and thus split the Church over four centuries ago. In part, this new Catholic appreciation for Luther brings to fruition the scholarly work of a number of researchers, who have demonstrated that the doctrinal gap between Catholicism and Protestantism is much narrower than is commonly supposed. Such understanding, here delineated by James Atkinson in a book published jointly by a Catholic and a Protestant press, is welcome and salutory. However, because our age is singularly indifferent to creeds and doctrine, it appears that much of the adulation of Luther is not the thoughtful recognition of a courageous theologian, but rather the irrational mythologizing of a prototypical defier of authority and thus the ahistorical creation of a new countercultural hero. As a leading Catholic scholar recently suggested, "I get the feeling that many Catholic leaders adore Luther primarily because they see him as a late-medieval Hans Küng." Since the absence of authority has proved Protestantism's most vexing and insoluble problem in trying to create cohesive communities of believers, such knee-jerk antiauthoritarianism does not bode

well for the future of Catholicism—or society. For when the posting of defiant theses, regardless of content, becomes the focus of worship, then no congregation can share any values more substantial than a preference for bulletin boards shaped like cathedral doors. □

* * *

J. D. Ogilvy and Donald C. Baker: *Reading Beowulf;* University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, OK.

People in pagan cultures knew they needed heroes: Who else could keep the dragons and other monsters at bay? After the coming of Christianity, the need for heroes was still obvious, though the new faith required its champions to show more devotion and less vainglory and vengefulness than their heathen predecessors. Written not long after England became Christian, *Beowulf* permits a glimpse into this transition in heroic types. Those unfamiliar with Old English literature can turn to translators for an understanding of the words of this masterpiece and to scholars like J. D. Ogilvy and Donald C. Baker for an explication of its themes, prosody, and backgrounds. It requires no special scholarly skills now, however, to see that Christianity is fast disappearing into a morass of amoral egalitarianism and that the notion of heroism is consequently undergoing another and more disturbing metamorphosis: heroes defending all of society against its common foes are being replaced by "role models" who legitimate its aberrant fringes. Indeed, those pursuing Grendel's murderous offspring today usually do so not to protect humane order by engaging the monsters in mortal combat but rather to further reduce our hopes for survival by gaining an interview or publication rights for another bestial life story. □

WASTE OF MONEY

Of Communists and Convicts

Nathan Heard: *House of Slammers;* Macmillan; New York.

"It was only when I lay there on rotting prison straw that I sensed within myself the first stirrings of good." So wrote Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in "The Soul and Barbed Wire" about his experience in the Soviet Gulag. Like most inmates in the communist penal system, he was guilty of no crime, yet he came to thank God for the humiliation of an imprisonment that helped him become a believer. Indeed, despite all of their incredibly brutal and dehumanizing efforts to make the Gulag a tool for enforcing their atheistic doctrines, the Soviet prison authorities unwittingly provided Solzhenitsyn

with a classroom where he learned "the truth of all the religions of the world" and "the falsehood of all the revolutions in history." Religion is valid, he concluded, because it combats the *"evil inside a human being."* In contrast, revolutions are invalid because they attack "only those carriers of evil contemporary with them (and also fail, out of haste, to discriminate the carriers of good as well)"; consequently, "they then take to themselves as their heritage the actual evil itself, magnified still more."

Nathan Heard has also spent a number of years in prison, and has likewise taken his experience as a basis for his writing. But he was justly convicted and sentenced by a judicial system that presumed his innocence, was never deprived of adequate rest or nourishment while incarcerated, nor was he denied visits from family and friends nor time for reading, writing, and recreation. Regrettably, he apparently learned from this experience only how to write noxious novels glamorizing communism as an alternative to the "racist capitalism" which allegedly forces men to crime when outside of prison and to bestial depravity when inside. His transparent protagonist in *House of Slammers*, an articulate armed robber who has educated himself while in prison and who is finally killed by murderous prison authorities for leading a demonstration for prisoner's "rights," spouts endless leftist drivel. Declaring an equal love for Jesus *and* Karl Marx, for Arthur Koestler *and*

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Lenin, he preaches the "total democratic equality" of every person (baby rapers included), prophesies that "revolution has

to be the main trend in the world today," and champions "what's best for all the world's peoples, not just for a privileged few." Not surprisingly, he doesn't "knock" communism because he cannot "see how I could do any worse under communism than I'm doin' here under capitalism."

Though one doubts that Mr. Heard would learn enough from *any* experience to attain the faith, insight, and moral stature of Solzhenitsyn, perhaps a year or two building communist power plants in Siberia by day and sleeping in communist straw by night would at least release him from the self-imposed imprisonment of pernicious ideology. (BC) □

Prolitkrit

Terry Eagleton: *Literary Theory: An Introduction;* University of Minnesota Press; Minneapolis.

To put Mr. Eagleton in the proper light, one might borrow a quotation from his own *Walter Benjamin; or, Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (1981):

> Let us review some of the names of the major Marxist aestheticians of the century to date: Lukács, Goldmann, Sartre, Caudwell, Adorno, Marcuse, Della Volpe, Macherey, Jameson, Eagleton.

He undoubtedly includes himself because he is the author of studies including *Marxism and Literary Criticism* (1976), *Criticism and Ideology* (1976), and *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (1982; see *Chronicles of Culture*, November 1983, pp. 41-42). *Literary Theory: An Introduction* has no obvious trappings of Marxism in its title. In the preface Mr. Eagleton quietly states, "This book sets out to provide a reasonably comprehensive account of modern literary theory for those with little or no previous knowledge of the topic." That neutral statement seems innocent enough. Given the fact that the "those" to whom he refers are undoubtedly students and teachers—for who else would concern themselves with the subject?—the book must have been designed and formulated with the classroom in mind. Indeed, the book, in effect, is something of a survey course: Literary Theory from the Formalists to the Post-Structuralists—and Beyond. Mr. Eagleton proves himself to be a lupine professor in wool apparel.

That is, people who claim to be among the ranks of the "major Marxist aestheticians" don't readily desert their posts; Mr. Eagleton has had no illumination since he made his claim. So while the book might *appear* to be above suspicion (it even has a very bourgeois Vermeer on the cover), it is actually a tract wherein kernels of "right thinking" are slipped in to aid the uninitiated who want to sound

knowledgeable in campus rathskellers or English department lounges. Mr. Eagleton sets up the various theoretical models only to dialectically bash them about. A line like "structuralism was the dupe of an alienated theory of scientific practice, one powerfully dominant in late capitalist society," almost makes us want to embrace the practice for no other reason than to vex those like Mr. Eagleton. By the end he claims, "There are indeed Marxist and feminist theories of literature, which in my opinion are more valuable than any of the theories discussed here"—and it's worth noting that the modest Mr. Eagleton discusses those theories through figures ranging from Arnold to Derrida, by way of theorists including Eliot and Barthes. And we thought that the Cult of the Individual was a no-no. □

Scuttling the Ship

Philip José Farmer: *Gods of Riverworld;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

In 1971 Philip José Farmer published *To Your Scattered Bodies Go*. With it, Farmer launched, figuratively speaking, what has become known to science fiction devotees as the "Riverworld series." There were four novels to landfall. Back in that general period of time, Kurt Vonnegut had become a darling. He had previously been a nobody, a writer of third-rate science fiction novels. But when the cuddles began, he wrote a piece for *The New York Times Book Review* in which he pouted, "I have been a soreheaded occupant of a file drawer labeled 'science fiction' . . . and I would like out, particularly since so many serious critics regularly mistake the drawer for a urinal." To a degree, he's right: people have regularly treated the genre with contempt. Part of the reason for that, of course, is that pulps about spiders from Mars aren't exactly well-wrought urns, and it may be a bit much to even call them chamber pots. Had Vonnegut's Tralfamadore not existed, no one would have bothered to invent it. However, there are some rogue science fiction writers who can write nebulas around mere gas bags like Vonnegut. Farmer is one of them. Not only are the first four books of the Riverworld series entertaining, they are also, to a certain extent, educational. While people like Doctorow use a historical figure here and there, Farmer didn't fool around: Richard Francis Burton, Samuel Clemens, Alice Pleasance Liddell Hargreaves (of *Looking Glass* fame), Aphra Behn, Tom Turpin, Cyrano de Bergerac, and several others don't make mere cameos, they are *the* characters. As Farmer knows something about them, has done more than a little homework, their development as characters and interactions in a world that he created (a Rousseauistic garden that proves to be unsatisfying) is rather interesting. But Farmer couldn't leave well enough unescorted; he had to add *Gods of Riverworld*, which is as uninteresting as the title is pretentious. Indeed, it is fit for Vonnegut's drawer. □

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Past & Presence

***Rumble Fish;* Directed by Francis Ford Coppola; Written by Francis Ford Coppola and S. E. Hinton; Based on a novel by S. E. Hinton; Universal.**

by Stephen Macaulay

An individual is the sum of his memories and his dreams. That, of course, is no great revelation; the Greeks were scripting plays about it thousands of years ago. Nowadays, however, the past is often overlooked or at least greatly diminished when compared with the Now. The future—the status of which tends to be mixed (i.e., this will be a glorious world or radioactive rubble)—also receives more attention. This state is no new development, either; it is a tendency that Moderns have exhibited for centuries. One of the consequences of ignoring the past is that would-be artistic creations are typically very shallow, or at least that's a characteristic failure. That is, art (the real thing) requires reflection; reflection, by its very definition, means that there must be another object, typically posterior with regard to time and certainly distant in terms of space, that the thinking subject ponders. Reflection speaks of depth: even a mirror with a physical thickness of just a few millimeters has an immeasurable metaphysical ground that stretches back, or away from, the observer. One can know one's position in life only by taking into account where one has been; certainly, where one is going is a factor, but it is a variable one. So reflection upon the past isn't enough, as concentration on it alone would result in a debilitating stasis. This is where dreams come in, dreams of a better life that are shaped and anchored through a recognition of possibilities, a perception that can only come through a reflection upon and understanding of the past.

These points are very evident in the formal aspects of Francis Ford Coppola's *Rumble Fish;* they are discernable, to a

lesser extent, in the script that Coppola created with S. E. Hinton, the author of the novel upon which the film is based. With the exception of one stylistic and symbolic touch, the film is in black and white. This approach is one that acknowledges a number of cinematic predecessors, the films of the 1930's about hard times and those of the 1950's about teenagers, in particular; it forms a cohesiveness between the form and content that is lacking in other black-and-white films with a contemporary setting, such as Woody Allen's *Manhattan* (1979). Coppola clearly understands what he owes to his predecessors and at the same time has a sense of where film is going. He reflects on both what the film medium is and how it works and so succeeds far more effectively than the limited material in itself would apparently permit. The story tells of the relationship between a younger and an older brother, about how the younger looks to the older as a model, as someone who he would like to become. The teenager has memories and dreams. Although they are flawed and dubious, they still bespeak a sense of direction in a lad who is, essentially, an inarticulate outcast. Coppola provides a rich language through images. □

Erratum

The complete information for *The Big Chill* (*Chronicles of Culture*, February 1984, pp. 44-45) is: Directed by Lawrence Kasdan; Written by Lawrence Kasdan and Barbara Benedek; Columbia Pictures.

Factualism

Erik Barnouw: *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film;* Oxford University Press; New York.

Cinema in our society serves, for the most part, to entertain. This is not to deny the existence of training films—educational tools, which are served by a sizable industry—but to take note of the fact that the cinema is almost wholly a popular commercial enterprise. As such, it caters more to the desire for distraction than to any demand for tutelage. Some might say that there is no such demand existent among the masses and that since the cinema is, given production costs, a medium that must appeal to many, economic suicide would be committed by any company that produced a film that even hinted of pedagogy. Curious, though, is the paperback book market, which is virtually populist by definition. Countless books are spewed out of presses that instruct people about practices including investing in stocks, potty training children, losing weight, writing résumés —and on and on. So-called "self-help" books are commonly list leaders, so it's evident that they appeal to thousands of people, not a quirky band characterized by plastic shirt-pocket pen holders and practical footware. If the people who plunk down $3.50 or more for books that are supplanted by others with a frequency that is more characteristic of magazines than books were to spend the same at the box office, then their selections would become "smash hits." People will laugh, cry, be amused, or become annoyed in public; lyceums and chautauquas are without support on a notable scale. If someone were to dare to make a

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feature-length film that deliberately aimed at educating the viewers, people would stay away in droves. Thus, documentary films end up being screened in school auditoriums, union halls, church basements, and the like; given the audiences, ideology undercuts the education.

As *Documentary* shows, people should not underestimate the significance and power of documentary films, for they help shape the views and opinions of those hearty few who are willing to take the time to watch something that isn't designed as entertainment, those who obviously have a social commitment. To treat the films as being marginal is to make a mistake. While general releases tend to be soporific, documentaries are often incendiary: chapter titles in *Documentary* include "Prophet," "Advocate," "Bugler," "Prosecutor," "Promoter," "Catalyst," and "Guerilla." Anyone who doubts the efficacy of the films should consult the bulletin boards at large universities and then wonder why there are all of those ads for films hailing the "heroic" Latin American revolutionaries, promoting the nuclear freeze, and excoriating American corporations—just to name a few of the topics. Clearly, some interest groups take documentaries *very* seriously. (SM) □

MUSIC

Old & Old as New

***Preservation Hall Jazz Band of New Orleans, LA;* Volume II.**

***Preservation Hall Jazz Band of New Orleans, LA;* Volume III.**

Linda Ronstadt and the Nelson Riddle Orchestra; *What's New;* Electra/Asylum Records.

On the back cover of Volume III, the entire Preservation Hall crew is grouped around a table on which is mounted a feast of classic Creole New Orleans food. For an insider of this kind of festivities, one glimpse at the jambalaya, sausage, rice, and bread suffices to know that the nourishment comes from Buster's, the famed musician's hangout and eatery at the corner of Burgundy and Orleans. Thus, instantly, just by looking at the picture, we land in the center of one of art's most powerful ingredients: authenticity. In the 1950's, a youthful jazz aficionado from Philadelphia by the name of Allan Jaffe came to New Orleans and never left. He immersed himself in the slowly evaporating sources of the music which defined the American 20th-century culture to a degree not yet fully researched and decided that authenticity must be rescued, preserved, and celebrated. To achieve this goal, he began selling authenticity and soon discovered that even in an America of *People* magazine and Studio 54 the real stuff sells like hot cakes. Today, thanks to him, Preservation Hall is a landmark, an institution, a symbol, a shrine, and a flourishing enterprise—while a bunch of octogenarian "musicianers" (Sidney Bechet's term) keep enjoying, in their

twilight years, the supreme bliss of being creative and admired artists.

Can a tough pop-rock singer find happiness in slow ballads in which the meditative blends with both impulse and sentiment? Once upon a time, such ballads denoted emotionality and sophistication in American popular music, two elements thoroughly ravaged by the merciless cult of amplification that reigned during the 1960's. Yet Linda Ronstadt, a veteran storm trooper of the California rock scene, proves that a reconciliation is possible. She sails smoothly through *What's New,* supporting the quasiphilosophical bemusement of the title in an act of easy symbolism, injects some rock inflections into Sinatra's "I've got a crush on you," stumbles a little on Billie Holiday's standards, and makes the final point on the album's cover in a tulle and satin dress. In it, she may attract quite a new constituency for herself and for anyone she would choose to campaign for in his quest for office. □

In the Mail

***The Higher Men* by Robert Arthur Paglia; Philosophical Library; New York.** This mystery about coed murders is, the publisher says, "so composed as to generate a dialectical process for discussion of formal, academic ideas encouraging the Socratic Method." A bigger mystery is this: who can withstand the barrage of asinine questions that are asked in the first three pages?

***Nationalizing Criminal Procedure: The Doctrine of Incorporation and the Threat to Federalism* by the Young America's Foundation in cooperation with The Center for Judicial Studies; Young America's Foundation; Reston, VA.** This book, billed as "A Handbook for the 1983-84 Scholastic Debate Topic" (i.e., *Resolved:* That the United States should establish uniform rules governing the procedure of all criminal courts in the nation) is packed full of information yet has only four pages for notes. Who's kidding whom?

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Video Clones

Television created a subgenre of music a few years ago that can be designated as "artificial, nonexistent, techno-pop," which must be differentiated from the succeeding, garden variety of techno-pop aired today by the human/machine combinations known as the Eurythmics, Flock of Seagulls, etc. The original includes the music of The Monkees, that group of well-scrubbed faces that was put together on the basis of a casting call: musicians need not apply. Mickey, Davy, Mike, and Peter sang and pretended to play, but little did those swooning 13-year-olds who sat transfixed in front of their sets realize that groups of bona fide studio musicians were really behind "The Last Train to Clarksville." Things really became bizarre a few years later when Archie comics were turned into a Saturday morning cartoon show and Arch, Jughead, and the gang became a rock group. Scratch an oldies-but-goodies package made during the past several years and you're bound to find the Archie's big hit, "Sugar, Sugar." Who cut that record? Never mind.

One of the *groups*—a term that must be used advisedly—that will undoubtedly become one of the most talked-about (and which, perhaps, will find true success in America: a *People* cover) is Was (Not Was). It consists of two men, Don Fagenson and David Weiss, who, showing their great senses of humor, sign themselves as Don Was and David Was on their latest album, *Born to Laugh at Tornadoes* (Geffen Records). Just as Detroit has brought forth "The New Chrysler Corporation," which is nothing more than the old one with an up-to-date adjective added, the Motor City is responsible for Was (Not Was), a name with the same amount of sense.

Musically, this is techno-pop at its best (worst?): a pastiche of musical styles driven by such electronic gizmos as the Oberheim OBXA, the Vocorder, and the now-ever-ubiquitous Moog. The results are a Motown-like ballad, "(Return to the Valley of) Out Come the Freaks," a surf-type style on "Smile," the rhythm-and-blues shouting of "Bow Wow Wow Wow," and more. The Was persons have their own Monkeesesque support in home-grown musicians including Mitch ("Sally Take a Ride") Ryder and Marshall Crenshaw. The most interesting cut, "Zaz Turned Blue," features the voice of the Velvet Fog himself, Mel Torme (who knew David Weiss as a former jazz critic at the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner*). Torme, one of the best white scat singers, has been vocalizing mellifluous nonsense for years; there is no change here.

According to Weiss, the pair started making music because they were unsuccessful some 10 years ago, when they were teens, in picking up girls on the key suburban cruising strip, Woodward Avenue. That's true romantic despair for you, circa the late 20th century. Chances are, the lonely boys went home one Friday night, turned on the tube, watched it bleary-eyed all night long, and found their calling the following morning. Even *American Bandstand* has consequences. (SM) □

ART

The Ring and the Brush

Norman Bryson: *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze;* Yale University Press; New Haven, CT.

Western painting—at least that which was produced before the advent, or onslaught, of photography in the 19th century—shares a characteristic with a trinket that could once be found in

cereal boxes and gumball machines: the flicker ring. The surface of this ring always shows an image; precisely what it is depends on the way that light impinges on it. There are three possibilities: two clear pictures and a blur. For the most part, the realist tradition has long held sway in the West: Norman Bryson commences his discussion with Pliny's story about Zeuxis, wherein Zeuxis paints grapes that are so lifelike that birds try to eat them. In effect, the Western painter has had to act as a sort of sterilized or neutral conduit that perceives and two-dimensionally recreates the objects of perception. Bryson notes that *style,* which many now consider to be one of the key traits that makes an artist more than a painter, was long considered by the cognoscenti to be a "personal deviation." Imagine what a man from the quattrocento would do when faced with a Braque or a De Kooning. The flicker-ring nature of realist painting is this: at one angle it is a counterfeit of the actual object(s), at the other it is a pigment-covered piece of cloth. Bryson attempts to hold up the tradition at a third angle so that there is a blur, a more indistinct image. In doing so, he becomes rather iconoclastic, stating from the start that as far as he's concerned, Sir Ernst Gombrich's answer to the question "What is a painting?", "The record of a perception," is "*fundamentally* wrong." He bases his belief on his insistence that a painting is more, that

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the artist is a social being who doesn't merely render what he sees in a purely optic sense because he has been conditioned to perceive various objects in the light of the culture in which he exists. Bryson then moves on to the sacred cows of semiotics—Barthes, in particular—and maintains that their formalist grids, which try to limit the boundaries of a painting to the square inches of paint, are simply deficient because "the conditions of material life" that exist outside the frame are generally ignored: "painting is embedded in social discourse which formalism is hardly able to see."

Bryson cites Chinese painting as being, in a sense, superior to Western productions in that they are more self-reflexive: "Painting in China is predicated on the acknowledgment and indeed the cultivation of deitic markers." That is, whereas Western painting tends to try to efface its materiality (i.e., real grapes, not paint), the Chinese brush strokes effectively call attention to themselves *as* brush strokes while simultaneously portraying a mountain or a bamboo grove. Bryson insists "that painting *as sign* must be the fundamental assumption of a materialist art history; that the place where the sign arises is the *interindividual* territory of recognition; that the concept of the sign's meaning cannot be divorced from its embodiment *in context*." As program notes for a critical practice, these pointers are not wholly incorrect: a painted image certainly signifies more than that which it portrays, assuming that it is meant to have social currency and is not merely a creation for the sake of itself; the perceptions of the viewers must be taken into account (e.g., whereas a Byzantine painter knew that his audience would automatically know the chapter and verse of his image, a contemporary viewer of the same thing requires a highly annotated field guide to Christianity). Too great a concern with the painting as image can lead to a sterile aestheticism; too great a concern with the social milieu can lead to Socialist Realism. A fine line must be drawn with a steady hand. But Bryson's ring finger is gesticulating wildly and the consequent blur isn't particularly illuminating. (SM)

Images, images, ima . . .

***The Work of Atget: The Ancien Régime;* The Museum of Modern Art; New York.**

Bill Harris: *New York at Night;* Stewart, Tabori & Chang; New York.

Robert Freson: *The Taste of France;* Stewart, Tabori & Chang; New York.

Ansel Adams: *Examples;* New York Graphic Society/Little, Brown; Boston.

William Manchester: *One Brief Shining Moment: Remembering Kennedy;* Little, Brown; Boston.

Photography reigns supreme and today no one would dare deny it the rank of art. Yet, we are more certain about this self-evident truth when looking at the images of Atget, who still belongs to the 19th-century tradition of the magicians of the post-daguerreotype, or to that of Adams—who is one of the most distinguished perpetuators of that legacy. We wrote about the first two albums in this series of photographs by Eugene Atget published in this country (*Chronicles of Culture,* Vol. 7, No. 8, August 1983), and have acknowledged his pioneering genius, subtle significance, and priceless heritage. *The Ancien Régime* only confirms our opinion. In it, Atget consolidates with an incomparable visual consistency, our acquaintance with the grandeur and depth of what is called French civilization. Confronted with the imagery, one feels more poignantly than ever that *"les civilisations sont mortelles"*—as formulated by Verlaine, Atget's contemporary. Emptiness and decay seem to suffuse the plates, but, oddly enough, there's something ennobling and hopeful in a Versailles without tourists. And looking at the façade of Petit Trianon through Atget's antiquated lens makes one instantly recognize how the past and present mix in French cultural destiny, and where all those great tastemakers of elegance like St. Laurent and Givenchy come from. Tradition, tradi....

New York at Night is exactly the opposite: both tradition and subtlety are drained off from this copious, lush volume of pictures as if a vacuum cleaner were trained on them. Only big cities live at night, while other cities sleep—which makes them no less rich in complexities and substances, just half-alive. By *big* we mean not necessarily large cities but the grandiose, mean, and ebullient—those like New York City. The images are evocative, superbly reproduced, and composed into an integral volume. They also deserve some better text. The introduction by one Mr. Suares (listed on the flap as "author of many books," employed, at one time, by both *The New York Times* and *New York* magazine) consists of listing statistics and restaurants. The same, more or less, goes for Mr. Bill Harris, who provided the body text: he tries, rather tediously, to capture the soul of New York through the reporting of factual data. The flatness of his commentary is in reverse proportion to the vertical eruption of architectural forms that leap from the pages and

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which, for almost a century, define New York in mankind's imagination. Harris was also an employee of *The New York Times,* which proves that little can be more boring than a native journalist who attempts to render justice to a fascinating city. We closed the resplendent album with an impression that by concentrating on bars and Rolls Royces, the authors have left the truly fascinating aspects of New York untouched.

Robert Freson's *The Taste of France* is a tantalizing delight. The quality of photography, typography, reproduction, and printing are unsurpassed, but to apply this kind of visual seduction to presenting perhaps the best food on earth is cruel. The perverse greatness of the volume lies in the circumstance that it focuses on folksy, outrightly peasant cuisine and alimentation, and brings back to the world's attention the mere fact that the real beatitudes and glories of eating are not in *Maxim's* or *Tour d'Argent,* but somewhere in Languedoc, Touraine, and Anjou. This is the most powerful populist manifesto available in the American book market to date, and whoever will be first to identify oneself with it—be it George McGovern or Jerry Falwell—will score a triumph for his party, program, or ideology.

Ansel Adams is the single most convincing and effective environmentalist

alive. We are not too taken with the ecologist argument as the acme of human cognitive effort and logical acumen, yet, looking at Mr. Adams's picture makes us uncharacteristically benign even toward the inanities of the Sierra Club dialectics. The haunting beauty of his imagery is well-known in the better-educated strata of our society, and any attempt to describe their form and content seems both futile and somehow diminishing of anyone who would attempt such a task. The photographs should be consumed as they are, for eyes only, and venerated as such. The loving care with which the New York Graphic Society and Little, Brown published Mr. Adams's book is laudable.

Mr. Manchester's *One Brief Shining Moment: Remembering Kennedy* has as much text as it has pictures. We leave the former to historians, political scientists, and social critics, but the latter is splendid and valuable as a document of how far modern journalistic photography can render a subject worshiped if it only wishes to do so. Some will say that it is a biased iconography, or graphic mythmaking. Maybe so. But because of the historic idiosyncracy of his fate, John Kennedy can already be placed above our quotidian strifes. This volume gladly serves as a sample of how to do it. □

THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

Demo Liberal Chutzpah

Once again, President Reagan has spoken out about the collapse of the American educational system (and correctly so) and stated facts that will hit anyone who has an average IQ, and one that is uncontaminated by liberal orthodoxy, with a force of a brick:

> Classrooms across the country are not temples of learning, teaching the lessons of goodwill, civility and wisdom important to the whole fabric of American life. . . . Each month, some 2-1/2 million students [are] victims of robberies and thefts and [in 1978] more than 250,000 students suffered physical attacks. In large cities . . . students . . . [are] afraid to go to school. . . . One psychiatrist who treats teachers said many of them suffer symptoms identical to those of World War I shell-shock victims.

And once again, a spokesman for the Democratic Party, a congressman from California, came up with an astonishing rebuke—an argument that boggles the mind through the sheer power of the insolence of a lie:

> This is brought about in large part by this administration's cuts in educational programs, including cuts in the school-lunch program, cuts in student aid and the attempt to eliminate the Department of Education.

So, let's once again call to mind truths as simple and self-evident as heliocentrism. The deterioration, degeneration, decay, and final failure of American education began under President Kennedy, when the manipulation of American sociocultural ethos became the exclusive franchise of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Consequently, a tremendous bureaucratic machine was erected, whose principles and laws were institutionalized and ruthlessly enforced

Fleeting Truths

Lane Kirkland, president of the AFL-CIO, responding to a question about the status of his organization in the late 20th century:

> The union is never defeated. As long as it stays it endures. The union will endure.

Presumably, it will stay. But what if it leaves? Or is defeated? Is Socrates a man? □

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by the ultra-left-liberal code-carriers, including the National Education Association and the fringe of theoretical extremism taught at the educational departments of major universities. An approach to public education has been sanctified which abolished teaching honesty, decency, interhuman obligations, respect for one's elder or neighbor, allegiance to the legitimate order of this country, and the truthful evaluation of American democracy's achievements. Instead, the contempt for any authority (except for that of "progressive" exemplars in pop culture), a scorn for the inherited concept of Americanism, and revolutionary instincts against any coherent set of existential and moral values that undergird any civilization have been proclaimed the best qualifications for "new" humanity.

By the end of the 1960's, the so-called socially committed young teachers openly vowed to disrupt the existing social fabric while the liberal press, especially the national magazines, touted their efforts as a noble fight for "new consciousness." Under Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford (yes, the last two were fully and callously oblivious to and uninterested in the issue as well) anyone whose views would contrast with those of the liberal educational establishment and agenda, were brutally persecuted, or evicted from HEW, and from any influence on the policy making; in Carter's separate Department of Education, anyone who would ask why words like "ethics," "discipline," "patriotism" are no longer used in the classroom, would be put on the rack of vicious ridicule and soon thereafter kicked out on the street as a fascist. By the beginning of the 1980's, anyone without liberal blinders clearly saw that our schools have become a jungle in which people and their humanness are murdered on a daily basis by youngsters whose "socially relevant" impulses have evolved into mental savagery. And today a Lib Democratic brazen demagogue from California tells us that it's all because of the cuts in the school-lunch program. □

JOURNALISM

The Washington Post's Weekend Guide

In the *Weekend At The Movies* section, the *Post,* that invincible bastion of D.C. journalism, reports on a movie which is:

> a decadent, daring film, filthy and full of hardcore porn and hardcore punks....

The *WP's* movie "critic's" final evaluation:

> this film is a shocker. Besides sodomy, there's oral sex and necrophilia. It's a film that means to abuse and insult. Still, if you can get past the adolescent anger, the S&M (really beefed-up, high-heel rock video), the brutality and the bad language, you'll get a kick out of "Liquid Sky," with its Big Bang theory of the cosmos.

The Gipper is in The White House and *The Washington Post* recommends necrophilia. Still more intriguing is the fact that the movie has been written and directed by a recent Russian emigré named Tsukerman. And we thought, naively, that once let in here, the dissidents get a kick out of freedom. As for the hip readers of the *WP:* we roughly know what they get their kicks out of. □

Spiteful Babble

The Grenada episode has shown, with crystal-clear unambiguity, that the press in America is not only held in contempt and deeply distrusted, but hated—pure and simply. Why is it so? Perhaps the ubiquitous blab—broadcast and printed—that is churned out with a monotonous regularity evokes a loathing of the producers, the liberal media. A case in point is the copy of a Gannett News Service operative, John Hanchette, which is so saturated with mindless venom that it oozes from the pages. Mr. Hanchette describes the case of a Columbia University journalism professor, one Penn Kimball, who—after a life of maintaining a leftist posture—obtained, under the Freedom of Information Act, his FBI records, and consequently discovered that he has been observed, watched, and monitored as a possible security risk, especially after he applied for a job with the State Department. Mr. Kimball has produced a book entitled *The File,* which, in turn, has set all of the Hanchettes in the land into a liberal frenzy. Writes Mr. Hanchette:

> Penn Kimball doesn't have to wait until January to find out what 1984 is like. He's been there for almost 40 years.
>
> Kimball, 68, could have stepped directly from the pages of George Orwell's *1984,* the novel about a

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nightmare society in which a tyrannical Big Brother government monitors the very thoughts of its every citizen.

He thus proves that he never read Orwell, and that the name is evoked only to satisfy his narcotic need for vitriolic anti-Americanism:

> He since has held important positions on *Time, Collier's, New Republic* and *The New York Times.* He worked as staff aide to senators and governors, including Averell Harriman and Chester Bowles. He taught Sunday School. His wife ran a Brownie troop.

In Orwellian Oceania, Mr. Kimball would have been pulverized without committing any transgression, just on the ground of the flimsiest suspicion that he would have perpetrated an act of mental independence. In Soviet Russia, the closest embodiment of Big Brotherism on earth, as Orwell himself observed, anyone who dared to ask the KGB for his files would be killed on the spot by the lowest clerk, who would act on the presumption that the person making the request is a dangerous maniac in the throes of some psychological rabies. In America, according to Mr. Hanchette's own information, Mr. Kimball publishes books, teaches at premier universities, contributes to magazines, and publicly chastizes the hapless security agents that try to keep tabs on someone who is innocent before proven guilty, but whose innocence needs a bit of checking. And then the press complains that it is hated without making its Hanchettes think before they start writing. □

Who's Number One?

In a recent editorial attacking the Reagan Administration's Central American policies, *The Nation* demonstrated once again how pro-Soviet attitudes so warp the mind that even such simple mental tasks as counting and adding and subtracting are no longer possible. Opined *The Nation's* casuists:

> If the State Department was seriously interested in reducing the daily body count, it could begin in El Salvador, which is probably the global champion in state-sanctioned killing these days.

Global champion? Despite their best efforts, how could El Salvador's right-wing death squads (sanctioned by no state whatever) ever keep up with the fully state-sanctioned Soviet columns reducing Afghan villages to bloody oblivion, or with Soviet-sanctioned-and-equipped Arab terrorists driving car bombs into every other building in Beirut? But then again, maybe *The Nation's* pronouncement simply reflects a sense of sportsmanship: Why should bush-league amateurs have to compete in the same global league as professionals? □

Cock Fight

Last fall, a holier-than-thou exercise in breast-beating was sponsored by *The Nation* and *The New Republic;* it was designated "Were the Rosenbergs Framed?" As expected, the one-upmanship lasted long after the programs were littering the floor of Town Hall. Andrew Kopkind, associate editor of *The Nation,* wrote up the event for his employer, which provoked a great deal of ire, proving that there is less honor and more falling out among thieves. One respondent, Sol Stein, wrote of Kopkind's "charge" that Stein and two other participants are:

> 'culturally ambitious "former" radicals who have made a bitter peace with repression.'

Stein parries:

> I wonder if Kopkind could be more concrete about my alleged 'cultural' ambitions? I now write for *The Village Voice.* Is that an example of ambition?

No. Certainly not. □

- **The Center on Religion and Society**
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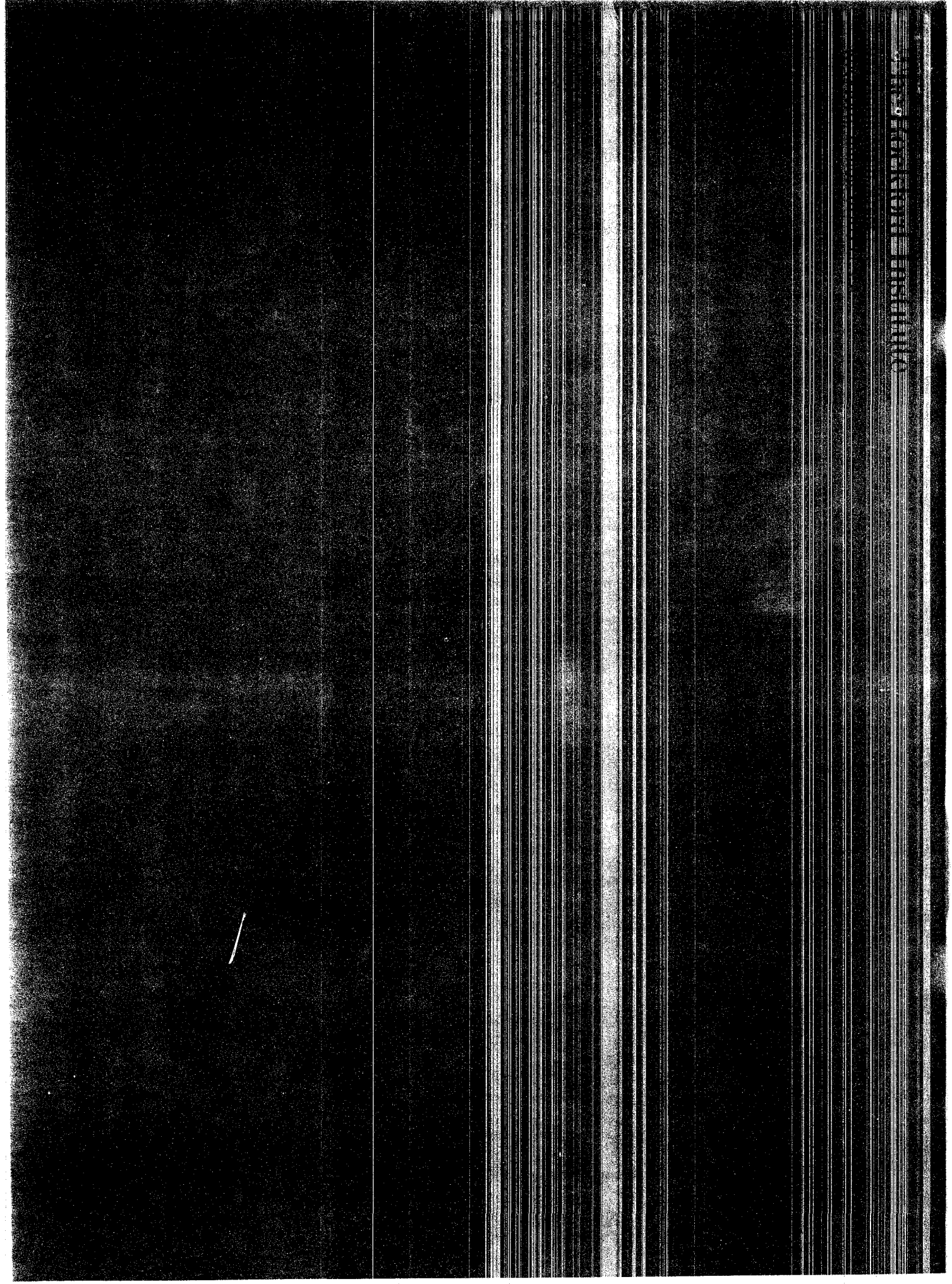

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